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CENTENNIAL DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED SEPTEMBER 9, 1850,

BEFORE

THE FIRST CHURCH AND SOCIETY IN ATHOL,

AT THE

CELEBRATION OF THE ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE ORGANIZATION OF SAID CHURCH.

WITH

AN APPENDIX.

BY SAMUEL F. CLARKE,

MINISTER OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN ATHOL.

"Behold the pattern of the altar of the Lord which our fathers made."

BOSTON:
WM. CROSBY & H. P. NICHOLS,
111 WASHINGTON STREET.

1851.

CAMBRIDGE:
METCALF AND COMPANY,
PRINTERS TO THE UNIVERSITY.

TO THE REV. S. F. CLARKE.

SIR : —

At a meeting this day held, by numerous citizens of Athol, who were deeply impressed with the historical value of the Discourse you delivered on the hundredth anniversary from the organization of the First Church in this town, the undersigned were appointed a committee to confer with you and to request a copy for the press.

HENRY W. CARTER, THEODORE JONES, JONATHAN STRATTON, GEORGE SPRAGUE, JOHN KENDALL,	}	<i>Committee.</i>
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ATHOL, *Sept.* 15, 1850.

TO HENRY W. CARTER, THEODORE JONES, ESQ., JONATHAN STRATTON,
GEORGE SPRAGUE, AND JOHN KENDALL.

GENTLEMEN : —

Your note, requesting a copy of my Centennial Discourse for publication, is before me.

I am happy, if the efforts which I have made to rescue the early history of this town, and especially the ecclesiastical history of the First Parish, from oblivion, are esteemed of any service. My purpose was simply to record the historical facts, and, after having read the same before the anniversary meeting, to place the manuscript with the parish records for future reference. But if it is the wish of those you represent to give the record of these facts a more permanent form, and render them of freer access to the public, I do not feel at liberty to refuse your request ; and therefore I herewith transmit a copy of the Discourse, which is at your disposal.

Very truly, &c.,

Yours,

S. F. CLARKE.

ATHOL. *Nov.* 5, 1850.

DISCOURSE.

BUT little more than a century ago, this whole township of land was one unbroken wilderness. No white man's axe had felled a tree. Huge and lofty pines, with majestic oak and sturdy chestnut, covered these hills and plains. Here stood the primeval forest. Within its deep, solemn shade prowled the wolf and the bear. The deer and the moose roamed quietly upon these meadows, or, startled by the approach of foes, shook the morning dew from the slopes and heights around. In the thick underbrush on the hill-sides, the turkey and the partridge reared their numerous broods, while the duck swam gracefully upon the secluded, lonely waters, all undisturbed, save by the eagle's scream or the red man's arrow. No dam but the beaver's impeded the progress of the streams along the valleys in their whole course to the Connecticut. Trout and pickerel, herring, shad, and salmon, moved quietly along the silent eddies, or darted up the noisy rapids ; while over all these ravines and hills and valleys and plains wild Nature wrapped her verdant mantle, and breathed her solemn air.

The river that then, as now, wound round these wild hills, and gave to the spot its chief attraction, the Indians called Pequoiag. (A.) From this the territory here derived its name, which, by a vote of the General Court of Massachusetts, that passed both houses in July, 1732, was, in October and November of the same year, surveyed and laid out into a township six miles square, and designated by its Indian name.

Within this township there were originally laid out sixty-three house-lots, of which one was for the first settled minister, one for the ministry, one for the school, and one for each of the sixty settlers. (B.)

A plan of the township, now in the office of the Secretary of State, Boston, upon which these house-lots are delineated, was surveyed by William Chandler, and accepted by the Council, June 18th, 1734.

Two days after, June 26th, the proprietors met at Concord, and, in presence and by authority of a committee of the "Great and General Court," of which Hon. William Dudley was chairman, were admitted to draw their house-lots as settlers in the township of Pequoiag on Miller's River. (C.)

The next year, on the 17th day of September, 1735, might have been seen five of these proprietors, with their families, just arrived through the wilderness from Hatfield, building their fires and cooking their frugal meal within the solemn shade of this unbroken forest. These were Richard Morton, Ephraim Smith, Samuel Morton, John Smeed, and Joseph Lord. (D.)

They had come to take up their abode on these unimproved hills, and commence the first civilized settlement in the Indian town of Pequoiag. Here they built their cabins and spent the winter, being obliged to go to Hatfield for the greater part of their provision, and to transport it to the settlement on their shoulders, with only marked trees to guide their steps for a greater part of the way. To add to their cares and comforts during this first lonely winter, three of these pioneer men had each a son born to him in the forest. (D.)

Soon after, probably the next spring, these families were joined by a number of other settlers, but how many cannot now be ascertained. Among these later settlers were Aaron Smith, Samuel Dexter, Ephraim Smith, Noah Morton, Robert Young, Nathaniel Graves, Eleazer Graves, Robert Marble, William Oliver and his three brothers, John, James, and Robert, most, if not all of whom, belonged to the original company of settlers formed at Hatfield. The Olivers were direct from Ireland, stout, hardy, resolute men. Robert Young was from the North

of Scotland, whence he removed to Cork, in Ireland, and subsequently to this country. He was a weaver by profession, and removed from Holliston, in the County of Middlesex, to Pequoiag. (E.)

The settlement was commenced here by the five pioneer spirits under discouraging circumstances. They were alone with their families in an entire wilderness, which, on account of the abundance of fish and wild game that this locality afforded, was a familiar haunt for the Indians. Of necessity the settlers were destitute of most of the usual comforts of life and the common implements of husbandry, obliged to journey on foot more than thirty miles through the pathless woods for all the means of sustenance which the gloomy wild of the forest did not afford. But they were men of resolute spirits, and were joined with helpmeets resolute as themselves, able and willing to share their trials. The prospect of new and early parental responsibilities was before them, but did not deter them from their enterprise. They had drawn their house-lots here, and here they were resolved to fix their habitations and rear their families.

It is probable that they located their dwellings and spent the first winter together, about a mile south of the present site of the middle of the town, on what is now called the Street. Richard Morton, it is said, built the first log hut, on the place subsequently occupied by his grandson, Joel Morton, near the house in which Mr. Lynde Smith now lives. Doctor Joseph Lord settled on the place now owned by Mr. J. Harvey Humphrey, near the spot on which the "Old Humphrey House" now stands. It is probable that, if other houses were built the first winter, they were in the immediate vicinity. On that location, without doubt, was commenced the first settlement of the town. Near this place, after the arrival of other settlers, they built their fort and their meeting-house. Previously, however, to the erection of the meeting-house on the Street, a house for public worship had been raised on a little rise of land just east of the "Old Burying Ground," about sixty rods southeast of the present railroad station, on the bank of Mill Brook, near the saw-mill now owned by Ethan Lord and Samuel Newhall.

This house was never finished, but was burned soon after it was erected, either by accident, or, as some say, by the Indians.

Very soon after the first settlement, probably the next year, clearings were commenced in different parts of the town. Samuel Morton made his "pitch" on the place known as the "Henry Lee Farm," now owned and occupied by Mr. John Waite. Aaron Smith settled on the place where Richard Moors now lives. Robert Young made his "pitch" on the Street, near to Richard Morton, on the place now owned and occupied by Mr. Woodcock. James Stratton settled on the Street where Mr. Thomas Babbit's house now stands. Noah Morton, who came a few years after the first settlers, located on the farm now occupied by David Harwood. Chestnut Hill and Lyon's Hill, so called, were among the localities first improved by the settlers.

These early settlers were bound together by the strongest ties of interest, friendship, and love. Their privations and trials and dangers served to unite still more closely and firmly the natural bonds of affection. "The friendship among these people, one towards another, was without a parallel."* All lived in fear, and each stood ready to succour the other in time of need.

To guard themselves from the attack of the Indians who frequented these meadows, and who felt keenly the wrongs their people had received from the whites, the settlers not only carried their arms about them at their work, but also built several forts, in which, at the close of day, or at the alarm of danger, all the families in the vicinity convened for mutual safety and protection.

The first and principal one of these garrisons was located on the Street, then called "East Pequoiag Hill," about twenty rods from where the meeting-house was subsequently built. The well which was within this fort marks the spot where it stood, from which water is now introduced through pipes into the house of Mr. James Humphrey. Another fort was located in the northwesterly part of the town, on what was then called "West Hill," on the spot where Mr. Jonathan Harwood's house now stands. The fort-well was formerly used by Mr.

* Mr. Humphrey's MS.

Harwood. Another fort was built, subsequently it is probable, on the spot upon which the Pequoiag House in the village is now located.

In these forts the settlers slept and spent much of their time. There are those still living in town who have heard their ancestors relate how, as night spread its mantle of darkness over the forest, and around their infant settlement, all would gather together in the garrison and sit silently without lights, listening with a cautious ear to every external sound, querying if each uncommon noise might not be the signal of danger from the hostile Indians.

At this remote day, situated as we are, surrounded by all the comforts of civilized life, we can hardly conceive of the privations and anxiety which these early settlers were obliged to endure. Still, the danger experienced here from the Indians was less imminent than that to which some of the earlier settlements in this vicinity were subjected.

The natives had, at this period, become reduced in numbers, and somewhat discouraged. They had seen their rich meadow lands along the fertile valleys of the Deerfield and the Connecticut encroached upon and somewhat thickly settled by the whites. They had seen the white man plant the corn lands of their fathers. They had heard his axe and watched his clearing-fires on the hunting-grounds they had occupied for centuries. Their fisheries had fallen into his hands. Their game had fled before the approach of civilization. They had seen their own wigwams demolished to make room for the dwellings of their civilized foes. They had been compelled gradually, settlement by settlement, to yield up the most dearly cherished of their once wild and happy homes. They had seen from their ambush the white man's plough tear open the graves of their fathers. Many and bloody were the struggles they made to redress their grievous wrongs, and regain their lost rights. But in vain. They had lost the control of the Connecticut. Its meadows waved with luxuriant crops, but they were in the possession of the aggressors. Lancaster and Leominster and Worcester were gone from them also. On the Nashua and the Merrimack civilization had swept away the red man's

villages. Frequently, we may suppose, the wronged Indian, in his sorrow, climbed the lofty heights of the distant Monadnock, and surveyed in sadness and tears the extensive encroachments which the English had made upon the domain over which his race had held dominion for more than a thousand years. It was worth his dying to regain these lost rights. But most of his tribe had already fallen in the vain attempt. To obtain possession of the valuable river lands was more than the sagacious son of the forest could hope. What remained here was hardly worth contending for,—a tract of broken, hilly, mountainous land, nowise remarkable for its fertility. Through this, however, flowed the Pequoiag River. It abounded in excellent fish. On its banks were some rich meadows fruitful with wild grain. Game from the river towns had retreated into these woods ; so that it was not without grief, that the aborigines first beheld the smoke of our fathers' fires curling up from yonder hill. They had been driven from the Deerfield, the Connecticut, the Nashua, and the Merrimack, and now they must leave the Pequoiag also. We cannot wonder if such reflections as these did at times stir the feeling of revenge in the bosoms of these wronged and uncultivated natives.

Under these circumstances those who had taken up their abode here had sufficient cause to fear attacks from these tribes ; and though this settlement suffered little in comparison with some others, still, considering the small number of its inhabitants, this town endured its full share of Indian depredations.

The increased hostilities incident upon the war between France and England, which commenced in the year 1744, kept the settlement at Pequoiag for several years in a constant state of fearful excitement, and seriously interrupted the agricultural pursuits of the inhabitants. Those who planted their field, or attempted to secure their crops, did so at the imminent risk of their lives. The Indians were continually lurking about these meadows and hills, seeking for scalps and prisoners and plunder. Their first victim was Mr. Ezekiel Wallingford, who cultivated land on " West Hill," and resided at the time of the calamity in the fort constructed for the protection of that location, and situated, as before remarked, on the site where the house of Mr. Jonathan Harwood now stands.

Supposing that he heard bears in his cornfield one evening, Mr. Wallingford went out to watch. He was advised not to venture, lest there might be Indians in the vicinity. It proved that the apprehensions of his friends were well founded ; for he soon discovered that the Indians, having deceived him by imitating the noise of bears in the corn, were surrounding him. Turning immediately on perceiving his mistake, he endeavoured to regain the fort, about a hundred rods distant ; but in passing a fence he was stopped by a ball from the enemy, which fractured his thigh. The tomahawk and scalping-knife put an instant end to his life, August 17, 1746.

Alarm guns were immediately fired from the fort, which were answered by a similar discharge of fire-arms from the garrison on the Street, to which the fort in Petersham quickly responded. The excitement was intense. There was no sleep that night in Pequoiag ; and before the morning sun looked over these hills, the soldiers of both towns assembled and joined in an unsuccessful pursuit of the enemy.

The next spring, in April or May, Mr. Jason Badcock, while looking for his cows on the meadow near the junction of Tully Brook with Miller's River, was suddenly surprised and fired upon by the Indians. Being slightly wounded, Mr. Badcock was taken prisoner by his pursuers, and was carried captive to Canada. But in about four months, having been redeemed, he returned to his former home in Pequoiag, where he resided for many years near the pond which still bears his name, — a beautiful sheet of water, secluded by woods and hills, which render it an inviting rural retreat for the lovers of natural scenery in the villages. Some apple-trees still mark the location of Mr. Badcock's dwelling at the time he was taken captive. Subsequently he removed to Waterford, Vt., where Mr. Jeremiah Morton, our townsman, visited him, and received from him the narrative of his captivity.

About the time of Mr. Wallingford's death, so alarming were the dangers, and so great was the insecurity of the place, that several families left the town and sought safety in "Fort Massachusetts," or "Hoosac Fort," which "stood on the bank of Hoosac River, in" the town of Hoosac, now "Adams,

about three miles and a half east of Williamstown." * Among these was the family of Mr. ~~Elhu~~ Smeed. But even in this fort there was no more security than in the one at Pequoiag. On the 20th of August of the same year, 1746, but three days after Mr. Wallingford was killed, the fort was attacked by an army of about nine hundred French and Indians, under General De Vaudreuil. Colonel Hawks, who at that time commanded the garrison, having with him but twenty-two effective men, and but thirty-three persons in all, men, women, and children, after a defence of twenty-eight hours, but not until his ammunition was spent, surrendered the fort, which was demolished, and the whole garrison, including Mr. Smeed and wife, two sons, and his little daughter Mary, then six years old, were taken prisoners. One of the prisoners, being sick, was killed by the Indians. Little Mary Smeed fell into the hands of a Frenchman, who was very pleasant and kind to her.

The first evening after her capture, looking out from the tent in which she was to pass the night, she saw her two brothers, whom she supposed she should never see again, as she feared they would all be massacred the next day. Her master, having nicely wrapped her in a blanket, laid himself down to rest, with his little prize by his side, where, composing herself, she soon fell asleep. But her slumbers were not undisturbed. Waking in the night, she resolved she *would* see her brothers once more. So this stout-hearted little Athol girl got up quietly from her master's side and went out of the tent at dead of night into the open air in the wild forest, it being dark and rainy, to seek for her brothers among the sleepers on the wet ground. She thought to recognize them by feeling of their hair. At length, after considerable search, she felt two whom she concluded must be her brothers. Accordingly, the affectionate little sister, delighted at her supposed discovery, pressed herself down between them, and once more fell asleep. Her master, missing her upon his waking, took a torch and went out to search for his little captive among the sleepers. Aware, perhaps, of the motives which induced the child to leave his tent, on finding

* *Mass. Hist. Col.*, Vol. VIII. p. 48.

and waking her, he held his torch that she might see where she had lain ; when to her utter astonishment and fright, instead of her brothers, little Mary saw that she had been nestling between two of the most grim and frightful Indians ! With a fluttering heart and willing step she followed her master back to his tent.

This little girl was obliged to travel, with the other captives, on foot through the wild wilderness to Quebec, exposed to all the hardships and dangers and trials incident to Indian captivity. In the course of a year her mother died. After a captivity of about two years they were ransomed, and the remainder of the family were transported in a ship to Boston, and from thence to their former home at Pequoiag.

Shortly after their return to this town, Mr. Smeed, being abroad on business, was shot by the Indians. The family was broken up in consequence. Little Mary was placed in the family of Rev. Timothy Woodbridge, of Hatfield, where she remained till womanhood, when she married Mr. Aaron Willard, and removed with him to Charlestown, N. H., and subsequently to Hartland, Vt., where she died of cancer, January 3, 1829.*

Another of the first settlers, Mr. Josiah Holmes, lost his life in consequence of sickness brought on by exposure and fatigue, "experienced while guarding and defending the garrison in which the little flock was obliged to resort for shelter and safety." † (F.)

Under all these trials and discouragements, the fathers of our present prosperity labored with persevering fortitude. They cleared up their farms, built their log huts, planted their rocky fields, and secured their scanty crops. They early availed themselves of the water power, which, from that time to the present, has been the principal means of growth which the town affords.

At a meeting of the proprietors, held by adjournment on the 18th day of October, 1738, a grant of sixty acres of land was

* Mrs. Willard was born at Athol in the year 1740. To her only surviving son, Mr. Aaron Willard, of Hartford, Vt., I am indebted for this account, communicated by his daughter, Mrs. Harriott Hamilton.

† Mr. Humphrey's MS.

made "to Mr. Samuel Kendall (G.) for building a corn mill and keeping it in Repair for y^e space of ten years, so as to Grind for y^e Above said Proprietors." * (H.)

It is probable that the mill built by Mr. Kendall, or his son, was the first erected in town, and was located near where Mr. Stillman Knowlton's machine-shop now stands, at the point of land where the stream which carries Mr. Knowlton's machinery divides from Miller's River. Such is the tradition. (I.)

Gradual prosperity attended the settlement. All lived together for many years in harmony.

The principal man among the company of settlers, as it appears, both for education and influence, was Mr. Joseph Lord, the first clerk of the proprietors, which office he continued to hold up to October 18, 1749, when, at a legal meeting of the proprietors, Mr. Abner Lee was elected in his place. (J.)

Mr. Lord was not only the first clerk of the propriety, but he was also the first doctor, the first preacher, the first magistrate, the first treasurer, the first tax-gatherer, the first surveyor, "in fact," as my manuscript authority has it, he was "Boss and all hands." † There can be no doubt that he was the leading spirit in Pequoiag for many years. But, unfortunately, some misunderstanding at length arose between him and the proprietors, which was the occasion of much excitement, and probably hard feeling, between them.

Mr. Lord refused to give up the records of the propriety, to obtain possession of which the proprietors made many fruitless efforts. At length, after the expiration of nearly ten years, at a legal meeting of the proprietors held October 11, 1758, it was voted, "That it is the desire of the proprietors that the committee" chosen for the purpose "do forthwith commence any action or actions at law, if they judge it expedient, against the said Joseph Lord, for the recovery of any books, records, plans, or writings in any way appertaining to the proprietors, or for the settling any accounts or concerns with the said Joseph respecting the proprietors." ‡ The result of the litigation

* Proprietors' Book, p. 10.

† Mr. Spooner's MS.

‡ Proprietors' Book, pp. 140, 141.

was judgment against Dr. Lord, rendered by the court, November, 1759, for one thousand pounds, to be recovered of said Lord by the proprietors for his neglect to deliver up the records, plans, &c., belonging to the propriety. (K.)

But before the court rendered judgment, Dr. Lord absconded from the Province ; consequently his estates and effects were taken on execution, and sold for the benefit of the proprietors. What became of the books, records, plans, &c., is not known, except that they were never recovered by the proprietors.

What was the particular cause of the misunderstanding between the proprietors and Dr. Lord, or what portion of blame belonged to either party, it is impossible now satisfactorily to determine.* (L.)

The loss of all the early records of the propriety was a serious evil, and one which renders it extremely difficult to make out a full and accurate account of the early history of the township. Fortunately, however, the records of the important proceedings of the proprietors relative to, and in connection with, this church are preserved entire.

* Dr. Lord was son of Joseph Lord of Charlestown, who was graduated at Harvard College in 1691, and was, subsequently, minister of Charleston, S. C. (Farmer's Genealogical Register ; Dr. Pierce's interleaved Triennial Catalogue.) He was graduated at Harvard College in 1726, and practised medicine for a time, it is probable, in Sunderland, near Hatfield (Trien. Cat. interleaved with notes by Nicholas Gilman, Grad. H. C. 1724), from whence he came with the first settlers to this town in 1735. Dr. Lord went from Pequoiag to Putney, Vt., then New Hampshire, "where he resided for about thirty years, when he removed across the river to Westmoreland, N. H., where he died ["December 7, 1788, in the 85th year of his age" *]. While he lived in Putney, Dr. Lord held for a few years a commission of justice of the peace. He was also appointed a judge of the court for Cumberland, now Windham, County, which office he held till the American Revolution. Tradition says that he was a man of considerable parts, and that he was respected by those who knew him."

The above quotation is from a letter received from Rev. Amos Foster, of Putney, and was dictated to him by Rev. Broughton White, of Putney, who, in early life, was acquainted with Dr. Lord.

* From the inscription on his gravestone, copied for me by Rev. Stephen Rogers of Westmoreland.

The period intervening between the arrival of the first settlers and the organization of the First Church comprises about fifteen years. The fathers of this town were not, however, the men to remain destitute of public worship during so long a time, situated though they were in the midst of the wilderness, destitute of many of the comforts of life. One of their first public acts was to build a meeting-house. (M.) This was burnt. Still they were not discouraged. Another was erected on "East Pequoia Hill" or Street, as before remarked, on the east side of the highway, near the fort.

There are those still living in town, who not only have a sweet recollection of this ancient house where our fathers worshipped, but also a remembrance of the old "Stocks" * alongside of it, which those order-loving fathers thought indispensable for the proper punishment of those who were so forgetful of decency as to violate the decorum which belongs to the Sabbath sanctuary.

In this house, from Sabbath to Sabbath, the few inhabitants of the place were accustomed to meet for public worship, though for several years without the services of a regular minister. Dr. Lord, who was then in good repute with the proprietors, being a somewhat "gifted" man, in addition to his many other responsibilities, officiated in the capacity of preacher. At length they secured the occasional services of a professed minister, as appears from the record of votes passed by the proprietors, — such, for instance, as the following: — "Oct. 18, 1749. Voted, that Mr. Brown be allowed for one Day's Preaching, five Pounds, Old Tenor." This is the first record extant of any provision made for preaching in the settlement;

* These stocks were made of two large thick planks, set up edgewise and rendered immovable, the lower one having spaces cut in the upper edge for the reception of the culprits' ankles; while the top one was hung fast to it upon hinges, and so fitted as to swing and shut close down upon the one beneath, thus rendering it impossible for the feet of the offender to be withdrawn, when it was made fast with a lock, and the unfortunate prisoner left lying upon his back on the ground, in no very enviable or comfortable position. These instruments of order were the terror of noisy boys and unruly men.

but as the early records are lost, it is possible, perhaps probable, that they employed a regular preacher previous to this date. That, from poverty or some other cause, they were not always prompt in paying their ministers, is apparent from the following vote, passed March 26, 1761, probably at least eleven years after the money was due.

“Voted, 43dly, That the Prudential Committee be desired, with all convenient speed, to know how much the Proprietors are indebted to the Rev. Mr. Timothy Brown, and to the Rev. John Mellen, and to pay them, — and to give them such an allowance as they shall judge reasonable for their being kept out of their money so long a time.”

The last clause of the vote breathes a redeeming influence over this long neglect of duty.

It is probable that the first considerable effort to settle a minister was made in the year 1749, and that Mr. Brown and Mr. Mellen preached here during that year.*

The next ecclesiastical record entered in the Proprietors' Book is as follows:—

“At a legal Meeting of the Propriety, held on the third Wednesday of May, 1750,” — of which Samuel Kendall was

* Of Rev. Mr. Brown I can learn little, except that he probably was graduated at Harvard University, A.D. 1729, and settled for a time at Little Compton, R. I. (See Dr. Belknap's, Winthrop's, and Dr. Pierce's interleaved Triennial Catalogues.)

Rev. Mr. Mellen, undoubtedly, was Rev. John Mellen, first pastor of the Congregational Church in Sterling. Very likely he left his people for a few Sabbaths, as preachers in those days not unfrequently did, to supply a destitute parish, and to aid and encourage them in providing for the settlement of a minister.

He “was born March 14, 1722; graduated at Harvard University 1741; thirty-four years pastor of the church at Sterling; twenty-one years at Hanover; died, July 4, 1807.” — “Mr. M., in his time, probably stood at the head of the clergy of the county.” (*Worcester Magazine*, Vol. II. pp. 224, 217.) He was one of those pastors of his age who ventured to oppose the more rigid theological doctrines of Calvin, — in which the laity in these parts had been almost exclusively educated, — and taught, somewhat modified, the more liberal views of Arminius. *History of Sterling*, in *Worcester Magazine*, which see for a full account of Mr. Mellen, and his dismissal from his parish.

Moderator, — “ Voted, that we choose an Orthodox minister to settle in this Place. Voted, That Mr. James Humfries, our present Preacher, be the Orthodox minister in this Place.”

Mr. Humphrey had been supplying the pulpit at Pequoiag for several months at the time these votes were passed, as appears from the record of a subsequent meeting, June 27, 1750, whereat it was voted, “ That Mr. James Humfries be allowed Eighteen Pounds lawful money for Preaching in this Place from the 10th of December, 1749, to the 16th of May, 1750, being Eighteen Sabbaths.”

Tradition says that Mr. Robert Marble was appointed a committee to go to Dorchester and engage Mr. Humphrey to come up here and preach as a candidate. Accordingly, having provided himself with a horse, saddle, and saddle-bags, Mr. Marble set out on his successful errand after the first minister of this Church. About to return, — provisions and effects, and wardrobe and sermons, being carefully stowed away in the saddle-bags, — the minister having mounted, Mr. Marble, with becoming respect, took his seat behind his future pastor, and thus they turned their faces towards the promised land. At length, the horse getting weary, Mr. Marble took upon himself the duty of footman ; and so the journey was continued, the minister, with condescending kindness, occasionally dismounting, while his faithful companion took the grateful seat in the saddle, and relieved for an hour his weary limbs. But, notwithstanding the compassion for the beast which allowed but one to ride at a time, so long was the way, so bad were the roads, and so steep the hills in this vicinity, that, some miles short of their journey's end the horse became so jaded, it was found necessary for both minister and attendant to avail themselves of their pedestrian ability, and drive their sorry nag before them to the little settlement at Pequoiag.

At the same meeting at which it was agreed to give Mr. Humphrey a call, the terms of settlement to be offered him were agreed upon, and it was “ Voted, That we give Mr. James Humfries, our present Preacher, the sum of Fifty Pounds lawful money of this Province of the Massachusetts Bay, per Annum, while he continues in the work of the Gospel

Ministry in this Place, — and farther, add to that Right, or whole share of Land, in the Township of Pequoiag laid out by the General Court for the first Minister of sd Pequoiag, of which the House Lott on East Pequoiag Hill on the west side of the High Way Number Eight is Part, — the Sum of *Sixty Six Pounds thirteen Shillings and four Pence* lawful money of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay, to be paid, one half within one Year after his Ordination, the other half within one Year after the Payment of the first Half, if he accepts of the work of the Gospel Ministry in this Place.” *

“Voted, That Lieut. Richard Morton and Mr. Robert Marble and Lieut. Nathaniel Graves be a Committee to see whether Mr. Humfries will accept of his Call to the Gospel Ministry in this Place.” A committee was also appointed at this meeting to “repair the Meeting House.”

Mr. Humphrey seems to have been very deliberate in considering the duty of accepting the call extended to him ; for although the proprietors held several meetings, apparently for the sole purpose of receiving his answer, yet it appears that he did not communicate it till, “at a legal meeting, after repeated adjournments from May 16, 1750, to August 8th ensuing,” the proprietors “Voted, That Nathaniel Graves wait upon Mr. James Humfries for his answer to settle with them in the work of the Gospel Ministry”; whereupon, “the said Nathaniel Graves waited upon Mr. Humfries and brought his answer in Writing under his Hand, which was read publicly in the Meeting,” and then ordered to be “entered upon the Proprietors’ Records.”

“Mr. Humfries’ Answer, viz.:—

“To the Proprietors of the New Township, called Pequoiag, at their Meeting continued by Adjournment from May 16th to August 8th ensuing. —

“Gentleⁿ,

“I received by the Hand of Lieut. Richard Morton a Copy of your Votes passed at your Meeting on the 16th of May last respecting my settling among you in the Ca-

* Proprietors’ Book, p. 126.

capacity of a Gospel Minister. And in Answer thereto, — In the first Place, I do heartily thank you for the good will you have expressed to me in your Invitation. After mature Deliberation upon the important affair, I now signify my acceptance of the Salary and Encouragement you have given me to Settle in the Work of the Ministry among you in this Place, in Case the Propriety will make me an Addition of Forty Shillings lawful money to your former Encouragement for my Annual Support, — and if it please God in his alldisposing Providence regularly to introduce me into the Pastoral Office over you, I hope by his grace and Spirit I shall be enabled in some good measure to fulfil my Ministry.

“ So I remain with hearty Regards your

“ Servant in Christ Jesus,

“ JAMES HUMFREY.

“ Pequoiag, Augst 8, 1750.” *

After the above letter was read, it was “ Voted, That Mr. Humfrey has Forty Shillings lawful money of this Province added to the former Encouragement we have given Him for his Annual Support, or Salary.” At the same meeting it was voted, “ That Lt. Morton, Lt. Graves and Robert Marble are chosen a Committee to agree with Mr. Humfrey when the Ordination shall be, — Also that they take Care to send to a Neighbouring Minister or Ministers to assist them in a Fast and in Gathering a Church in this Place.” †

The work of organizing a church in the wilderness, and ordaining a pastor over it, is now fully determined upon ; and these few settlers have set about it in lively earnest. They are duly sensible of the importance of this noble enterprise. They have carried forward for a few years their infant settlement. They have built a few log huts “ eighteen feet square and seven feet stud ” ; around each dwelling they have redeemed a few acres from the forest wild ; they have built their meeting-house on the hill yonder, under the cover of their strongest fort ; they have engaged in mutual worship there ; they have had occasional preaching ; but they are not satisfied.

* Proprietors' Book, pp. 128, 129.

† *Ibid.*, p. 129.

Their children are growing up unbaptized, and without the influence of a Christian pastor to mould their religious character. Keenly they feel this deprivation ; and though in numbers few, and in pecuniary ability weak, they resolve to remedy so great an evil.

After this manner we may suppose those devout fathers, as they sat together on a Sabbath evening, at set of sun, beneath the tall pines that cast their lengthening shadows across their narrow clearings, would converse on this solemn duty:—
 “ This will not do. Our children must be nurtured in the fear and admonition of the Lord. The lambs of the flock will be lost without a shepherd to take care of them. No settlement can flourish where God is not worshipped. If we expect to be protected in the forest, we must be ready to do our Father’s will. The Sabbath day must be kept holy. The ordinances of God must be observed. The Church of Christ must be established here ; and we must bow ourselves in prayer, and sacrifice our evil desires at the shrine of its holy altar.”

Such were the sentiments that stirred the souls of these primitive settlers, and moved them to action. A few doubting or selfish spirits may have objected ; but if so, their objections were little heeded. The committee chosen for the purpose obeyed their instructions, and sent invitations to the neighbouring ministers to come and assist them in forming the first Christian church in the new township of Pequoiag.

The 29th day of August, 1750, O. S., is a day never to be forgotten in the annals of our Church history. Just one hundred years ago to-day might have been seen three reverend clergymen, dressed after the fashion of the times, in large powdered wigs, surmounted by the three-cornered clerical hat, with the ministerial coat, and small clothes which were met at the knees by long, smooth silk or worsted stockings, the feet of which were protected in soft calf or deer skin shoes, fastened together with large, shining silver buckles. These were Rev. Samuel Kendall, first minister of New Salem, Rev. Abraham Hill, first minister of Shutesbury, and Rev. Aaron Whitney, first minister of Petersham.

On that day, the one hundredth anniversary of which we now

commemorate, these faithful ministers of Christ "met at Perquage, and after Solemn Prayer to God, they gathered the Church and it was Imboded and each member signed the Covenant." *

One hundred years ago ! How instinctively do our thoughts turn back over the lapse of the century that has passed to the old meeting-house on yonder hill, in which the few inhabitants of the place are religiously observing a day of fasting and prayer ! We see them now, those men of pious hearts, bending in solemn prayer to God for guidance and direction in their sacred enterprise. With rapt attention even now we listen to the reading of the church covenant, which is offered for these pious men to accept as their bond of faith and union. It is a most interesting document. (N.) With solemn voice it is uttered, sentence by sentence, to the deeply interested assembly ; and then, after the pastor elect, Richard Morton, Nathaniel Graves, Abraham Nutt, Robert Marble, Samuel Morton, Nathan Wait, Eleazer Graves, Ephraim Smith, and Aaron Smith walk up to the table, and affix their rude signatures to this solemn covenant.

The church is now formed. The members are but *ten* in number, including the pastor, but they are the men of influence in the settlement. Their names are an earnest of success. Once more they bow themselves together in prayer, and supplicate the blessing of God upon the act they have now consummated ; and then in reverential order they withdraw from the house of worship.

One hundred years have gone by ! Those venerable fathers have passed away. In the old graveyard yonder in the woods, on the bank of the murmuring brook, where they built their first church, their bones lie buried. The mounds of their resting-place are almost obliterated ; for, shameful to relate, the irreverent and ungrateful ploughshare has torn open their graves ! But the church they gathered still survives, and, in grateful remembrance, on this deeply interesting occasion, offers its ready tribute of praise to those who formed it.

The fast being over, and the church being duly organized, active preparations were made for the coming ordination, — an event of no ordinary moment in the early history of New England.

At a legal meeting of the proprietors, September 5, 1750, a committee of five was appointed "to Provide for Mr. Humfrey's Ordination." Lieutenant Graves, Lieutenant Morton, Mr. Nutt, Mr. Samuel Morton, and Mr. Aaron Smith were appointed "a Committee to make a Boat to cross Miller's River so big as to carry two Horses at once." Lieutenant Graves, Lieutenant Morton, and Mr. Robert Marble were chosen "a Committee to sign the Letters to send to the several Churches in order to ordain Mr. Humfrey."

The date of the ordination is authenticated by the following record, entered in the Church Book in the handwriting of the first minister : —

"Perquage, November the 7, 1750. An Ecclesiastical Council convened in Perquage ; the Council consisted of the Church of Christ in Dorchester, ye Chh. in Hatfield, ye Chh. in New Salem, ye Chh. in Roadtown,* ye Chh. in Nitchawoag,† and ordained Mr. James Humfrey Pastor over the Chh. and Congregation in said Place.

"Attested by JONATHAN BOWMAN, Mod."

Of the proceedings of the ordaining council I can learn nothing. Undoubtedly the churches above named were represented on the occasion by their respective ministers ; viz. the church in Dorchester by Rev. Jonathan Bowman, the church in Hatfield by Rev. Timothy Woodbridge, the church in New Salem by Rev. Samuel Kendall, the church in Road Town by Rev. Abraham Hill, and the church in Nichewaug by Rev. Aaron Whitney.

Rev. James Humphrey was born at Dorchester, Mass., March 20, 1722, and was graduated at Harvard University in the year 1744. Of his early education nothing is known, except that he descended from most respectable and pious ancestors. (O.) It is very probable that he pursued his pro-

* Now Shutesbury.

† Now Petersham.

fessional studies with Rev. Jonathan Bowman, the minister of his native town at the time of his ordination. But of this there is no positive evidence.

Mr. Humphrey commenced his duties as pastor of this town under very trying and discouraging circumstances. His salary was small, — a trifle over twenty shillings a week. His parishioners were few, — no more than he was able and accustomed to call upon with ease between breakfast and dinner. From the best information obtained, I cannot persuade myself that there were more than twenty families in the place at the time of his ordination. These were in constant danger from the hostile Indians. Even while assembled in the meeting-house, on the Sabbath, they felt obliged to keep their arms by them, and to station some of their number at the “door-posts,” as sentinels, to guard against surprise from “their devouring enemy, whilst others were worshipping God within.”* “For three successive years”† did the first minister of Pequoiag carry his weapons of defence into his pulpit, and preach with his gun by his side. Behold them now, those early settlers of this present flourishing and populous town, in the time of their trials, assembled, on a winter’s day, in their small, rude house of worship. The storm is beating without. There is no fire within. The cold wind howls mournfully among the surrounding trees. The light snow is sifting through the numerous crevices. There are no pews there, save one.‡ Upon some rough planks arranged on rude blocks are seated the fathers of the church, dressed in stout woollen frocks, with their snow-shoes lying by them, and their bear-skin caps hanging upon the muzzles of their faithful guns, which rest against their shoulders. The pastor, too, has hung his three-cornered hat upon his own trusty musket, which leans upon the pulpit’s rough side, and is now earnestly dispensing the solemn truths of the Gospel to his few serious and attentive hearers.

The fathers, and mothers, and children, all are there. Fear is no stranger to their hearts, though the sentinels are at the

* Mr. Humphrey’s MS., before referred to.

† *Ibid.*

‡ Dr. Lord’s.

door-posts. The preacher, too, is conscious of their danger, but he bids them put their trust in God. Possibly he has chosen these words of the Psalmist for his text: — “Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart.” He alludes to their privations and numerous hardships with true sympathy, and then cheers and comforts the desponding of his flock with happy quotations from sacred writ. “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.” “Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.” “The Lord is great and greatly to be praised.” “Blessed be the name of the Lord, for the Lord God is righteous in all that he does.” Such preaching did them good. Under its influence they were happy, notwithstanding their trials, and lived “in perfect friendship one with another, and their minister.” *

The next year after his settlement, Rev. Mr. Humphrey was married to Miss Esther Wiswell, of Dorchester, a lady of high respectability and much energy of character, and who during a long and useful life was highly esteemed and much respected by the people of this town. The record of his marriage is thus entered upon the Church Book in his own handwriting: — “Dorchester, October the 9th, 1751. James Humfrey and Esther Wiswell was married, and the third day of November we got home to Perquage.”

The occasion of the return of their pastor with his young and accomplished bride was one of lively and exciting interest to the unpolished but affectionate parishioners of Pequoiag. Before the sun had dissipated the dew on the morning of the 3d of November, a company of happy men and joyous youth, mounted on horseback, each with his good wife or smiling maiden seated on the pillion behind him, were riding over the old street, now moving with cautious step along the obstructed path, and now galloping in frolicsome glee across some open plain, full of high anticipation, on their way to Barre to welcome the arrival of their absent pastor, and escort him with his polished bride within the precincts of their own rude but happy homes. That was a joyous day for the settlers on these hills.

* Mr. Humphrey's MS.

The few who remained were busy making due preparation for the reception of so important a personage as their pastor's welcome bride.

Margery Morton, the first white female born in this town, then a girl of thirteen summers, was left at home to assist in serving up the wedding supper. The oven of which she had charge was located without the house, — a circumstance not uncommon in those days. Within it were smoking the choicest dishes the united parish could afford. The pies she had made with her own hands, and she was anticipating with joyous pride — we will not call it sinful in one so young — the praise she might receive for her skill at pastry from the accomplished bride of her reverend pastor. But while these and like thoughts were engaging her attention, the warm savor from the oven's rare contents had attracted the notice of some rude boys, who, in common with the rest of the settlement, were enjoying a holiday on the occasion of their pastor's wedding. Never before had their senses feasted upon viands so delicious and inviting. The temptation proved too strong for their unstable principles to resist, and when the young cook bounded, with a light step and joyous heart, to set the fruits of her extra labor upon the waiting table, lo ! no pies were there ! Sad, sad, indeed was her disappointment ; and even when in her extreme old age she used to relate the story of her misfortune, it was hard for good old " Aunt Margery " to suppress a little of the same indignant spirit which, for a moment, got the better of her wonted good-humor when first she discovered her loss.

For more than twenty years after his settlement, the pastor and people of this town seem to have lived together in uninterrupted harmony. During this period record is made of but *three* church meetings, — one of the surest evidences of the tranquil and happy condition of the church.

During this long period of peace and prosperity, the discipline exercised by the church was probably of a mild and judicious character.* Vexed questions in theology, which about that time

* The first vote ever passed by this church was (December 7, 1750), "That no person should be required to make a Relation when they were admitted into the Church," — an expression of the good sense which directed the church policy.

agitated many New England churches, were, most likely, very seldom, if ever, discussed by the pastor. Indeed, it is probable that Mr. Humphrey was not much of a theologian. What were his peculiar doctrinal tenets cannot now be determined, except from a knowledge of the current theology of those days, and from the church covenant which he subscribed. This is somewhat Trinitarian and Calvinistic in its character. We have, however, no reason to suppose it was in those times very strictly construed, since it does not appear that any person was required to sign the covenant upon joining the church for at least twenty-five years from its formation, — not until after dissatisfaction with the pastor was manifested on the part of some of the members.

The first circumstance that occurred to disturb the quiet of the little church at Pequoiag was the same which interrupted the harmony of very many churches in Massachusetts and vicinity some seventy-five or eighty years ago, namely, the innovation which about that time was made in the old custom of singing. Formerly the deacon read the hymns, two lines at a time, which were immediately sung by the choir or congregation, when two more were “deaconed out,” which also were executed by the singers, and so on, till the entire hymn was read and sung. Now, it was voted both by the church and congregation to dispense with the deacon’s service in the exercise of singing the hymns. This simple change, like all other improvements in religious forms, was regarded by some as an unhallowed desecration of religious worship. The vote was a close one ; in the church eighteen yeas and eleven nays ; the congregation voted thirty-three in favor of the change and twenty-eight against it (June 10, 1773). Two months’ time was allowed by the church “for the people to Provide themselves with Psalm Books before they Sing without reading.” The completion of the new meeting-house on the common, and the opening of the same for public worship just about this time, may have had a tendency to hasten on this innovation.

But the old-fashioned way of singing was not to be given up without another effort to sustain it. Accordingly, at the desire of William Oliver, Seth Twitchel, John Oliver, Abraham Nutt,

and William Bigelow, a meeting was called to see if the church and congregation would reconsider their former vote ; but there was still a majority of three or four in the church, and seven in the congregation, in favor of abiding by the former decision to dispense with the deacon's reading. " Upon consideration," however, " to pacify and ease the mind of the aggrieved party, the church consented to read with singing half the time for four sabbaths upon the aggrieved party attending on the public worship." This vote shows how keenly the minority felt the innovation. Nor did reading half the time for four Sabbaths entirely quiet their disturbed minds. Church meetings are more frequent now than formerly. Deacon David Twitchel resigns his office in the church. Two years after, Mrs. Susannah Haven, conscientiously anxious, no doubt, to let posterity know how true she was to the better form of worship, expressed her dissent from the change in the following protest, which was entered upon the church records.

" MRS. SUSANNAH HAVEN'S PUBLIC DECLARATION.

" *To the Church of Christ in Athol and Congregation in said Town.*

" Whereas, in divine providence my Lott hath been ordained in this Town, where I have enjoyed God's word and ordinance, which I think are dear to me ; and should esteem it a great Priviledge Still to enjoy them ; but as the Church and Congregation hath altered their manner of Singing ; it hath been and is much to my Dissatisfaction and grief, as I am not able to see how the Continuing the Bass between the Lines of the Tenor, is consistent with Singing with the Spirit and Understanding also, as it appears to me that the Understanding must be useless in that unnasary part of the Sound ; but Considering this as no Essential part of our holy Religion, and y^t I am Sensible y^t I cant do any thing more than hath been done to reform what I Esteem Wrong in the manner of Singing, I Esteem it my Duty in this public manner to Let you know what those things are y^t are greivous to me, and y^t I wholly disapprove of in your Singing. So wishing grace mercy and peace may be multiplied to you, I desire your prayer for me y^t I may be led into

the Knowledge of my Duty in all things, and be enabled to Square my Life by the rules of the Gospel.

“ So I remain your Sister in the faith,

“ SUSANNAH HAVEN.

“ Athol, Feb. 22, 1775.” *

This innocent change proved a bitter apple of discord to this hitherto remarkably peaceful church. Brother Seth Twitchel absented himself from public worship and the “special ordinances.” A minister of the Baptist denomination (Elder Whitman Jacobs) commenced preaching in town about this time, and was gathering a few adherents about him. (P.) Those disaffected on account of the singing seem to have attended somewhat upon his preaching. Mr. John Ballard desired to be dismissed to his society. But the church voted not to dismiss him, and for several reasons, one of which was, that the Baptists received two of “our members into their church” before they were dismissed, or “took any proper measures to obtain a dismission” from the First Church. Committees were appointed to “converse with our Brother Seth Twitchel,” &c. Church meetings become still more frequent, a circumstance always ominous of evil. More stringent church regulations are adopted. Members are now (1775), for the first time, † required to make a “Relation publicly of their faith and experiences before they are received into full communion.” The church adopt the Cambridge Platform for their “Rule of Discipline, excepting the seventh and two last Chapters,” and that part of the sixth chapter which relates to “Ruling Elders distinct from Teaching Elders”; also the sixth section of the twelfth chapter they would not adopt. ‡ August 14, 1775, the church voted, “That the Pastor should desire every person, hereafter, to sign the Church Covenant upon their being taken into the Church,” — the first and only evidence we have on the

* Many protests which are now made against innovations upon established religious forms, or, more particularly, doctrines, will, we apprehend, a hundred years hence, be regarded as we now regard this honest declaration of good Madam Haven.

† See note on page 26.

‡ Church Book, p. 19.

church records that subscription to any articles of faith was ever made a requisite to church-membership ; and it does not appear from the records that this requisition was ever complied with. The covenant is subscribed only with the names of the ten persons who founded the church. Evidently, some portion of the church are growing more rigid with regard to doctrinal opinions. The subject of the baptism of infants whose parents were not in full communion was discussed. (1777.) The church decided that such baptism is "warranted by Scripture." Elements of discord appear more plainly upon the church records for this year. One of the articles recorded in a request for a church-meeting is "to see if the Church will desire the Rev. Mr. James Humphrey to ask a Dismission from his Pastoral Care of the Church of Christ in Athol." Upon which, when they came together, the church voted "that they were satisfied with their Pastor unanimously ; only one person, Deacon Haven, voted against y^e pastor, or, in other words, desired him to ask a dismission." At this meeting, "our Brother Seth Twitchel promised to *try* to conform to the manner of singing that the Church had voted in, and attend upon public worship and Special Ordinances."

But the grievous feeling seems to have been too deeply seated for him to overcome ; for, two years after, reasons are again offered why he absented himself from public worship, &c. The church voted to "forgive him," "upon which" he asked a dismission ; having, since the change in singing, himself experienced a change in his views relative to the subject of baptism. The church, in a truly liberal spirit, granted his request, "in manner and form as follows," viz. :—

"That as our Brother Seth Twitchel has, on account of an alteration in his sentiments respecting some points of Christian practice, upon which men of knowledge, wisdom, and piety have differed in their sentiments, desired a dismission from his particular relation to us, that he may join with a Christian Society whose practice, in such points, is more agreeable to his present sentiments ; and as we are willing every one should enjoy full liberty of conscience, [therefore it is voted that] he be dismissed from this Church and recommended to any regular

Christian Society that he may chuse to join to, as one in good standing with us."

There can be little doubt, that the above preamble and vote, so truly liberal and Christian in its character, is the composition, and breathes the spirit, of the pastor; and also that it is indicative of the kind of influence which he exerted on the minds of his church and congregation, — an influence to which, no doubt, this town is much indebted for the present decidedly liberal religious views cherished by a large majority of its inhabitants.

But the difficulty in the church is not healed. On Sabbath day, May 27, 1779, after the services were closed, the following request, signed by Aaron Smith, Samuel Morton, John Haven, Jesse Kendall, Wm. Bigelow, and Nehemiah Ward, was read, viz.: —

"To the Rev. Mr. James Humphrey. Sir, — Please to call a meeting of the Church to take the following things under consideration. . . . 2ly. To see whether the Church will take any measures to desire Mr. Humphrey to ask a dismission from his Pastoral Care of the Church of Christ in Athol, and what measures they will take for that purpose."

After which "it was put to vote to see whether the Church would have a Church Meeting appointed, and it passed in the negative, only five of the above signers voted for a Church Meeting."

The church are not yet ready to be separated from the pastor who has watched over them in the wilderness, shared their trials with the Indians, joined them in marriage, baptized their children, visited them in sickness, and breathed the heart-felt prayer at the grave of their dearest friends.

But the disaffected are bent upon their purpose. Another year of agitation passes, and they bring the subject before the town, who vote (May 24, 1780) to request Mr. Humphrey to ask a dismission, and appoint a committee to see if the church will concur. A church meeting is called accordingly, on the 14th of June following, of which, by invitation of the church, Rev. Mr. Lee of Royalston — who favored the dismission of Mr. H. — acted as moderator. "The Request

for the meeting, — signed by Samuel Morton, Deacon Aaron Smith, Deacon John Haven, and Wm. Bigelow, — to see if the Church will desire the Rev. Mr. James Humphrey to ask a dismission, and to enquire into the reason of uneasiness with the Rev. Mr. Humphrey, was read.” Upon which the last clause was, very properly, first considered, and the reasons for the uneasiness of those who signed the request for a meeting were read; and, after some debate, the question was put, “Whether it is the desire of the Brethren that Mr. Humphrey ask a dismission, and it passed in the negative.” “N. B. There were but nine out of five or six and twenty who voted to desire a dismission.”*

The fact expressed in this vote evinces the attachment which existed for the pastor, and discovers a unanimity in the church hardly to be expected after three years of disaffecting agitation, kept up by the most influential members, with the countenance of a neighbouring minister.

Three times has the question of dismission been brought before the church, and three times it has promptly passed in the negative. Despairing of affecting their object through this instrumentality, the disaffected, determined to pursue their purpose, move the town to propose terms of resignation to Mr. Humphrey, and appoint a committee to act upon the church and solicit its concurrence.†

It is now proposed to the church to submit the difficulties “between pastor and church to a mutual Council.” Another church meeting is called for this purpose (Oct. 18, 1780), and also “to consider and act upon any other proposals that may be offered, either by Pastor or Church.” At this meeting, of which Rev. Mr. Lee was moderator, the troubled pastor, having become “worried out,” — to use the expression of an old gentleman who now lives and remembers the agitation, — for the sake of peace, made the following proposals, viz.: — That in case the arrears of his salary were paid up and made good to him, if the church would agree to it, he would consent to have a colleague settled with him, himself relinquishing his

* Church Book, p. 22.

† Records of Town Meeting, July 4, 1780.

salary, and “suspending the exercise of his ministry excepting the administration of special ordinances, and preaching when the pulpit was not otherwise supplied, being allowed a reasonable compensation for preaching.”

On receiving this proposition, the church adjourned three weeks for consideration. Having met again on the 20th of November, after a deliberate debate, the question was put, “Whether the Church approve and accept of the proposals made by the Rev. Pastor.” But the majority of the church appear still to be too much attached to their minister to be thus separated, — “and it passed in the *negative*”!

Thus did the church cling to their pastor in every attempt of the dissatisfied to sunder their union. But Mr. Humphrey foresaw that, so long as he continued in his pastoral office, there must continue discord among the people of his charge. Hence, actuated, as the reasonable inference is, by the earnest desire to promote the Christian spirit of peace, harmony, and love among his people, “the Rev. Pastor,” with noble disinterestedness and singleness of purpose, arose, after the above decision was made, and “renewedly urged the Church’s acceptance of his proposals.” Renewed debate ensued; the church reluctantly yield to the urgent request of their beloved pastor; the former vote is reconsidered; and upon the question being put a second time, “Whether the Church do approve and accept of the proposals made by the Rev. Pastor, it passed in the affirmative”; and a committee was appointed to lay the proposals, with the action of the church, before the town for their concurrence; after which the meeting dissolved, and many sad hearts went home to tell the unwelcome news to their anxious families.

On the 11th of December, 1780, at a meeting of the town, the above proposals were accepted. After which it was voted that the committee appointed to settle with the pastor “desire the Rev. Mr. Humphrey to supply the pulpit as heretofore.” At a subsequent meeting, however, held on the 26th of January following, the town voted to “*disannul and make void*” the vote by which the proposals of Mr. Humphrey for a dismission were accepted.

Evidently the town are quite as much excited and quite as much divided as the church on the question of dismissal. No less than nine town-meetings were called to consider and act upon the proposals of Mr. Humphrey before the town could agree to his dismissal.

The motives which actuated the parish in their opposition may have been various. Many were very strongly attached to their minister. Others felt too poor to pay up his arrearages and settle a new man with a larger salary. "Mr. Humphrey was good to wait on them," says my aged informant. Some, perhaps, did not like the idea of *two* ministers over one parish, since, as it appears, they had neglected to pay even one his just due. Possibly a few might be anxious enough to dismiss him, but wished to continue the connection a little longer, in the hope of closing the bargain in a manner more favorable to the pecuniary interest of the town.

The following entry on the town records may shed light upon the subject. October 1, 1781. In town meeting, "Voted to choose a committee of three men to go to the Rev. Mr. James Humphrey, and see if he will make some alterations in his proposals," and "that the committee propose to Mr. Humphrey to abate so much of his salary as his estate would have paid towards the present war, had it been rated with other estates; and he to quit his right to the Desk as soon as the town give him security upon what is due upon said settlement." (Q.)

At the next meeting Mr. Humphrey was requested to be present and make proposals. After which the town "Voted not to accept of Mr. H.'s proposals as they now stand." By this time the excitement and disaffection had become somewhat alarming, as appears from the following article in the warrant for a town meeting, January 24, 1782, viz. : — "To try the minds of the town to see what number of the people are disposed to use their endeavours to keep the town together supposing that Rev. Mr. Humphrey can be settled with and dismissed from his pastoral office in this town upon such conditions as they shall think reasonable." Upon this article, "Voted to keep the town together."

At this meeting a committee of the town, chosen for that purpose, waited on Mr. Humphrey, and received from him proposals as follows : —

“ First. That if my person and estate in this town be exempted from all taxation, in as full and ample a manner as has been by law and custom used in respect of settled ministers of the Gospel, during my natural life, and that I be exempted from all military duty in as full a manner as that provided by law now belongs to settled ministers of the Gospel.

“ Secondly. And that the Pew Ground, that is, the pew in which my family has always sat, be granted to me and my heirs and assigns for my, or their, use for ever.

“ Thirdly. And that what of my salary for years past that is still due, be paid me in good merchantable rye at four shillings per bushel, flax at eight pence per pound, &c., &c., or in silver money equal thereto at the time of payment, and that the town choose a committee of two or three men in their behalf, and they give me security with simple interest until paid in the following manner ; — one year’s salary in three months, and the remainder in twelve months ; — and the Church join with me in calling of the Ecclesiastical Council, and the town be at the cost and charge of the entertainment of the Council. Now if the town see fit to comply with the above proposals, and give me sufficient security of the same, I will ask a dismission from my pastoral office as a minister in this Church and town, when said Council is met for that purpose.

“ This from your friend,

“ JAMES HUMPHREY.

“ Athol, January 24, 1782.

“ N. B. What is written is written.”

These proposals were laid before the town, and were accepted ; and a committee was appointed “ to give Mr. Humphrey security for past salary.” The church concur (Jan. 31), and consent that the pastor ask a dismission, *on condition* that the town comply with and “ *do fulfil* ” Mr. Humphrey’s proposals ; and, on the same conditions, vote “ to join with the Pastor in calling an Ecclesiastical Council, to dissolve the pastoral relation between pastor and church.”

Agreeably to the arrangements thus mutually agreed to by pastor, town, and church, the ecclesiastical council, composed of representatives from the churches in Royalston, Petersham, New Salem, and Warwick, met at Athol, February 13, 1782 ; and, by their direction, the Rev. James Humphrey was, the same day, dismissed from his pastoral relation to the church and people in this town. At the same time, Rev. Joseph Lee of Royalston, moderator of the council, was chosen to be moderator of this church so long as it should remain destitute of a pastor.

Would our limits permit, we might justly and profitably pause here for reflection. The connection between the pastor and the church and town over which, in their infancy and trials, he had watched with devoted fidelity and affection, is now dissolved for ever. A stranger is to take his welcome place in the pulpit, at the baptismal font, at the marriage altar, in the chamber of sickness, and by the bedside in the solemn hour of death, — a change of no small moment to those who had grown up together in the wilderness, especially to him who had so long and so happily discharged these pastoral duties. But I must forbear. My duty is to relate facts, not to indulge in reflections.

An indication of the feelings entertained by the pastor himself relative to his dismission may be discovered, perhaps, in the portion of Scripture which, according to tradition, he selected as the text for his Farewell Sermon, viz.: — “ The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith *in them that heard it.*”

Probably this town never has experienced an excitement more intense, more universally felt, or more threatening to the interests of the town, than that which agitated its citizens during the more than five years’ controversy relative to the dismission of Rev. Mr. Humphrey. It came well nigh dismembering the territory, so as to leave but a small part of the original grant, and that “ so weak and in such form that its inhabitants would be no longer able to carry on as a Town.”* In the

* Remonstrance against division of town. Town Records, 1783.

warrant for the very town meeting at which the final arrangements for the dismissal of Mr. Humphrey were agreed to, there was an article to see if the town would vote off all the land, and inhabitants thereon, lying north and west of Miller's River, with the exception of "Deacon Kendall's land," a part "to be incorporated into a separate district or join with any other town as they think fit after being set off"; the other part, namely, that west of Tully Brook, with the above exception, "to be erected into a town with part of Warwick, part of Royalston, part of Eruensha"; and although a majority of the meeting voted against the design of this article, still, so strong was the feeling in its favor, that a petition was soon after sent to the General Court, praying that the territory above described, or some portion of it, might be set off and incorporated into a separate town; and notwithstanding that this town remonstrated with the court against the act, nevertheless the town of Orange, a part of which was set off from Athol, was incorporated the next year.

There can be little doubt, judging from the letter and spirit of the records, that this division of the territory of the town was effected in consequence of the controversy relative to the dismissal of Rev. Mr. Humphrey.

For more than five years after the connection between the first pastor and his people was dissolved, the town continued in an unsettled condition. The old feeling, which for five years previous to that event had agitated the people, was not easily allayed. The excitement of the Revolutionary war, and the heavy burdens growing out of it, must be taken into consideration in connection with local affairs, in order properly to understand the agitated and almost distracted state of the town during that period.

The parish were poor. So was their former minister. They had agreed to pay him the arrears of his salary, but neglected to do so. Consequently, a suit at law was commenced (June, 1789) by Mr. Humphrey against the town for the recovery of what they owed him, the result of which was, that the town chose a committee to settle with Mr. Humphrey, and instructed the selectmen to "give an obligation" for what the town owed

him. The action was dismissed from the court, neither party appearing.*

Thus, at length, all controversy between the town and Mr. Humphrey was finally settled ; but the feeling existing still was such as to induce the former pastor to withdraw his remaining connection with the church in Athol, and connect himself with the church in Warwick.† He continued, however, to reside in this town, — in the house now occupied by his grandson, James Humphrey, — from the time of his dismissal to that of his death, which event occurred May 8th, 1796, in the thirty-second year of his ordination, and in the seventy-fifth year of his age.

Quite a number of old people now living in town remember well the venerable pastor of their early years, and speak of him in terms of respect and affection. None of them think he was a “great preacher,” but all with whom I have conversed speak of him as a “good man,” the noblest reputation any preacher can leave behind him. Not a breath was ever breathed against Mr. Humphrey’s moral character. The only complaint remembered is, “*He was not smart enough*,” — a charge which many a faithful minister has had to endure.

During the Rev. Mr. Humphrey’s ministry there were added to the church, in all, 121 members ; of which 36 were received by letter. Five hundred and ninety-three children were christened by him and other ministers who officiated in his desk. He made record of 194 deaths in town during his ministry, and of 113 marriages. The first child baptized by Mr. Humphrey was Jemima Oliver, daughter of John and Mary Oliver (April 14, 1751). The first persons ever married by him were James Stratton, Jr. and Abigail Morton (Dec. 26, 1751).

As has been before remarked, Mr. Humphrey, probably, was not a theologian. He had not the means, situated as he was for many years in the woods, of devoting himself much to theological study. His intercourse with learned divines, and even with books of theology, must have been very limited ; and probably his ideas of his ministerial duty were too elevated to

* Court and Town Records.

† Church Records.

allow him to give his attention much to the discussion of mere sectarian dogmas. Hence no distinct traces of his peculiar doctrinal tenets now remain.

Most likely he was a Trinitarian, after the fashion of his times, receiving the doctrine as he heard it, without any particular comment or thought upon it. We cannot suppose that in his circumstances he arrived at a more correct appreciation of Christian theology than his contemporaries, most of whom were believers in the doctrine of the Trinity. He may have been somewhat Calvinistic in his religious views ; but of this we have no better evidence by which to judge than the testimony afforded by the church records, and the liberal religious spirit which has always been cherished by a majority of the inhabitants of this town. Inviting the critic to these sources of information, we leave him to draw his own conclusions.

As a pastor he is remembered with affection by those who were not old enough to judge of his theology, but who could appreciate a spirit of kindness. It was his custom to collect the children of his parish twice in each year, for the special purpose of catechizing them in the old Westminster Catechism, after the manner of all contemporary New England pastors. We are not aware that he ever published any kind of a discourse, or any other composition ; and we have sought in vain for a single manuscript sermon from his pen.

His remains, with those of his respected wife, rest in the family tomb, in what is now familiarly called the Old Burying Ground, in distinction from the new cemetery near to it. It is to be regretted that there is no inscription to attract the present and the future antiquarian to the spot where is enshrined the mouldering dust of the first minister of Pequoiag.

Rev. Joseph Lee of Royalston continued to officiate as moderator of this church from the close of Mr. Humphrey's ministry to the ordination of his successor, a period of nearly six years.

The work of settling a new minister appears to have been attended with about as much difficulty as that of dismissing the former one. The town appoint and reject and reappoint com-

mittees to act with the church committee "for procuring preaching." They instruct them now to act discretionary, next to endeavour to secure the services of a particular candidate, and then not to hire such and such persons to preach. At length the church vote to give Mr. John Bruce a call "to settle with them in the work of the Gospel ministry" (Feb. 1784). In the course of the same month the town concur; but why Mr. Bruce was not settled here, I have no means of determining. Probably he did not receive a very unanimous vote in his favor, since at the same town meeting "it was put to vote to set off the north part of the town of Athol to Royalston, and it passed in the negative." Evidently the harmony of the town is not yet complete.

Another preacher must now be looked up, — no easy task, perhaps, — such a one as will unite a divided parish. Joshua Morton is sent on two "journeys after a minister," for which he is allowed, for the one, two pounds nine shillings and ninepence, and for the second, one pound two shillings and sixpence. July, 1785, the town direct their committee "to use their endeavours to hire Mr. Akens." October 21st of the same year, the church come together and vote "to proceed now to the choice of a pastor." But the vote passed by so small a majority that it was thought best to reconsider, and to invite the gentleman "who has of late been preaching to them to preach longer." He does not suit. It requires a man of peculiar abilities to unite the parish that has been distracted by conflicting opinions for ten years. There is but one man, as it would almost seem, who is adequate to so noble and arduous an undertaking in this place. Fortunately that man is now the candidate. The church appreciate his worth, and vote "*unanimously* to invite Mr. Joseph Estabrook to take the pastoral care of them in the Lord, and to settle in this town in the work of the Gospel Ministry" (July 25, 1787). On the 8th of the following month the town concur with the church in extending the invitation to Mr. Estabrook, — an action which proved most salutary for the interests of the parish. Under its influence the discordant elements are happily lulled to peace.

In those days it was customary to pay ministers a certain

sum, independent of their annual salary, as an “encouragement” or inducement to settle over a particular parish, — a practice which had no small influence in giving permanency to such settlement. The terms of Mr. Estabrook’s settlement were these, viz. :—The town voted to give him two hundred pounds for his “encouragement” to settle with them, and also the use of a pew in the meeting-house so long as he should remain the minister of the town. For his “support” or salary they obligated themselves to give him “seventy-five pounds” in cash, and twenty cords of good fire-wood, annually.

In answer to these proposals, Mr. Estabrook returned the following rather characteristic letter.

“ TO THE CHURCH AND CONGREGATION OF ATHOL.

“ Honored Fathers and much esteemed Friends, — I have for some time past had under consideration the invitation you was pleased to give me to settle with you in the work of the Gospel ministry, and that being an affair of the greatest importance, I have taken it into serious and deliberate consideration, and have been seeking direction and assistance of God, the Father of Lights and the Fountain of Wisdom ; and as God often makes use of instruments to communicate his will, and in his word has told us, that in the multitude of counsellors there is safety, I have taken the advice of my Rev. Fathers in the ministry (and particularly of those in this neighbourhood), and of my relatives, and many other gentlemen of my acquaintance, — and considering the unanimity of your request, that I should tarry with you in the work of the Gospel ministry, and the industry which I have observed among the inhabitants of the town, I am now determined, and do accept of your friendly invitation ; and, under a conviction of my weakness and insufficiency for this great work, do entreat your earnest prayers to Almighty God for me, that I may have grace and wisdom given me faithfully to discharge the duties of this arduous and important station ; and by deriving grace and wisdom from Him in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, I may give to every one his portion in due season ; and by the Divine blessing attending my labors, I may

be made instrumental of bringing many sons and daughters into the fold of Christ, the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls. Confiding in your sincerity and affection for me, I am willing to spend and be spent in the service of your souls and the cause of my Redeemer. And though you may find many imperfections in me, and in my services, yet I hope you will never have just reason to say or think but what your best and greatest interest lies nearest to my heart.

“I conclude by wishing that you may be directed by wisdom from above in all your future proceedings, and that the spirit of love and peace may be with you, and that we may all be mutual blessings to each other, and fellow-heirs to the heavenly inheritance.

“From your sincere friend and humble servant,

“JOSEPH ESTABROOK.

“P. S. — I shall expect to be indulged with three or four Sabbaths yearly to visit my friends.”

The town appoint Wednesday, the 21st of November, for the ordination of Mr. Estabrook, and choose a committee to provide for the ordination at the expense of the town, “in the best and cheapest way they can.” The church voted “to send to seven churches to assist” in the ordination.

Accordingly, in response to letters missive issued in behalf of the church by Deacon John Haven, Mr. John Oliver, and Mr. John Foster, the following-named pastors, with delegates from their respective churches, met at the house of Rev. James Humphrey, in Athol, on the evening of November 20, 1787 ; viz. Rev. Jonas Clarke, Lexington ; Rev. Ebenezer Sparhawk, Templeton ; Rev. Joseph Brown, Winchendon ; Rev. Joseph Lee, Royalston ; Rev. Solomon Reed, Petersham ; Rev. Samuel Reed, Warwick ; Rev. Samuel Kendall, Weston. The council was organized by choosing Rev. Mr. Clarke, Moderator, and Rev. Joseph Lee, Scribe ; after which it was voted unanimously that the council are so far satisfied with the proceedings of the parties, and with the “moral character, ministerial qualifications, and religious sentiments of the candidate, as to proceed to his ordination, agreeable to the request of the Church.”

Agreeably to this vote, the next day the council proceeded to the meeting-house on the common, and “publicly ordained the said Mr. Estabrook a Christian Bishop, and committed to his oversight the particular church and congregation of the Lord in Athol” (November 21, 1787).

Rev. Samuel Kendall made the introductory prayer, Rev. Joseph Brown offered the ordaining prayer, Rev. Jonas Clarke preached the sermon, Rev. Ebenezer Sparhawk gave the charge, Rev. Joseph Lee gave the right hand of fellowship, and Rev. Solomon Reed offered the concluding prayer.

The sermon by Mr. Clarke, the charge, and the right hand of fellowship, were published at the time, and many copies of them are still extant.

Rev. Mr. Estabrook entered upon his pastoral duties in this town under adverse circumstances. The parish and church had both been for many years in a state of exciting discord. The former pastor had been compelled to yield to the disaffected, and retire from his pastoral office. For many years the flock had been without a shepherd to guard them. But the young and devoted pastor is equal to the arduous duties before him. He gives himself up at once to the spiritual interests of his people; and, by that ready, quick perception of human character, and that admirable tact as a “peace-maker,” for which through his long and happy ministry he was ever remarkable, he soon succeeded in bringing harmony out of discord, and in winning the confidence, love, and respect of his entire parish.

In less than a year after his settlement, Mr. Estabrook was married (September 3, 1788) to Miss Lucy Cushing, daughter of Mr. Nathaniel Cushing, of Pembroke, and on the 12th of the same month he arrived with his wife at Athol, where her kindness and attention soon won the attachment of his parishioners, many of whom still live to hold her in cherished remembrance.

Rev. Joseph Estabrook was born at Lexington, March 4, 1759. His early education appears to have been directed by respectable and judicious parents. Though but a boy, on the

memorable morning of the Lexington fight, April 19, 1775, upon receiving the alarm of the approach of the British regulars, after having assisted his father before light in carrying his mother, with a young infant, in an arm-chair about a mile back from the scene of danger, seizing his musket, he joined those citizens who braved the English troops at Lexington on that eventful morning. The bloody bodies of several who fell on that occasion in defence of provincial rights were carried lifeless to his father's house by the assistance of the boy who afterwards was for so many years the devoted pastor of this people. He was graduated at Harvard University, July, 1782, and afterwards pursued his studies preparatory to his profession with Rev. Jonas Clarke, the minister of his native town.

For nearly forty-three years, Rev. Mr. Estabrook continued, in the midst of a united parish, the faithful minister of a happy people, and finally closed his life, much lamented, on the morning of Sunday, April 18, 1830.

Of the parish during his ministry there is little for history to relate. Through the admirable management of its most *prudent* and judicious pastor, it was saved from those unhappy and unprofitable religious agitations which, at that age, distracted the New England churches, impeded the progress of Christianity, introduced bitterness of feeling between neighbours and friends, and ruptured the most sacred ties of many a family circle. Although he perceived the elements of such excitement and division in his parish, and foretold with prophetic accuracy how soon those elements would be kindled into a living flame after his decease, nevertheless, the pastor's personal influence, and that alone, kept them in subjection till he was called to yield up his pastoral charge, and pass to the spirit world.

Though little can be said historically of the parish during Mr. Estabrook's successful ministry, other than that it was always peaceful and happy, — and nothing more worthy can be said of any parish, — yet much may be said of the pastor himself ; and it is a debt which history owes to the second pastor of this church, faithfully to chronicle, at least, a brief sketch of his ministerial life, character, religious opinions, and influence among his people.

The materials out of which to form this sketch are abundant, and I have spared no pains to freely avail myself of the same. Not only have I sought information from very many of his parishioners who still remember him with affection, and from his own family, but also from his venerable surviving contemporaries in the ministry, a number of whom we are most happy to welcome here to-day. To no less than five of these reverend fathers * am I indebted for a separate account of Mr. Estabrook, each written without the knowledge of what was expressed by the others, and yet each harmonizing with the others, and also with the general impressions gained by three years' familiar intercourse with his living parishioners, and with the particular statements of responsible members of his surviving family. Time and space compel me reluctantly to condense and blend together the information derived from these most authentic sources, and record it in other language than I could wish.

Mr. Estabrook was a man of large perceptive powers. He possessed a rare knowledge of human nature, and seemed at a glance to form an accurate estimate of individual character, — an ability which enabled him to adapt himself to all classes of men and opinions, so as, without compromising his own dignity or sentiments, almost invariably to win confidence and respect from those with whom he had intercourse, whether parishioners, social friends, or his associates in the ministry, among whom conflicting opinions were somewhat rife in his day. In his manner he was affable, courteous, and condescending to all. Hence, “he was every one’s friend,” † and consequently shared largely in the affections of all who felt his friendly influence. This trait in his character was marked, and enabled him to exercise an extensive and most salutary influence in his parish. In consequence of the confidence it won, “he was often let into many a family trial and difficulty which were studiously kept from the world. Thus he was able, by soothing words and mild advice, to plant the olive-branch at

* Rev. C. Wellington, Rev. A. Harding, Rev. L. Wilson, Rev. P. Smith, and Rev. Dr. Thompson.

† Rev. P. Smith.

the domestic fireside, which before was the scene of discord and strife.”* He seemed to have the happy faculty of always saying in a few words just those things which would fall upon agitated feeling like oil upon troubled water. Amusing incidents are related both by his parishioners and his contemporaries in the ministry, indicative of his manner of quieting the little disturbances that sometimes arose in his parish, and also among the members of his church. We venture to give a single instance of this kind, which we take to be a very apt illustration of his common practice in healing the germs of bitterness that occasionally were taking root in the bosom of the church.

In those old-fashioned times, when to take with a friend something even stronger than tea or coffee was not considered out of character even for the minister, it was whispered round the parish, that one of the most respectable members of the church had indulged a little more freely than was becoming the important position he sustained. The whisper gradually became louder, till it was deemed expedient, on account of the reputation of the church, to bring the affair to the notice of the pastor ; which was accordingly done, in the presence of the offending party and some of his complaining brethren. The pastor, not being able, probably, to decide who of the accusers had the right, according to the Christian rule, to cast the first stone, with characteristic shrewdness commenced the conversation with his wonted cheerfulness, and continued it till it gradually ran into a lively flow of wit, which soon put the whole company in a very good-natured sort of humor ; when, with consummate tact, taking advantage of the kindly feeling he had awakened, he incidentally alluded to the charge brought against the worthy brother, and rather jocosely inquired if the fact was as had been reported. To which the brother replied, that, being in company with a number of friends, he did drink a little, and afterwards *smoked* a good deal, which affected him unpleasantly and made him rather dizzy. The explanation was in perfect unison with the humorous condition of the party, which the pastor’s keen eye perceiving, turning to the other brethren

* Rev. P. Smith.

present, Mr. Estabrook good-naturedly replied, half humorously and half seriously, and yet in a meaning tone, — “ I guess, brethren, we ’ll call it *all* smoking and let it go ; attribute it all to the smoking, and say no more about it ” ; and then, turning to the other party, he added, with a no less significant expression, “ Be *very careful*, brother, and not *smoke* so much again.”

All understood the decision of the pastor thus wittily given, and were put in too humorous a mood by it to care to dissent, especially as he, with adroit skill, immediately turned the subject of thought, and entertained them with anecdotes and pleasantry, till each went away, resolved to “ call it all smoking and let it go ” ; nor am I aware that the penitent brother ever gave occasion for the repetition of the pastor’s very timely caution. This witty expression of the pastor has passed into a proverb in this town and vicinity.

Mr. Estabrook’s mind was most happily blended, ever furnishing an abundant supply of wisdom, wit, and kindness. He could chat freely with the most illiterate of his parish, much to their edification, and would impart much grave and serious instruction in the course of a half-hour’s pleasant conversation ; a very rare, but very desirable, talent for a minister to possess. “ Though not a great student, nor carefully read in his profession, yet he was a very acceptable preacher.”* His sermons were characterized by an earnest Christian spirit, mingled with a large share of common sense, and were always listened to with attention and interest. His discourses were practical, rather than doctrinal. He carefully avoided in his public and private teaching those disputed points in theology which were the occasion of much unprofitable religious controversy in this country about a century ago, and which again induced discord and separation in very many New England churches during his own ministry. In these controversies he never would engage, not even in private conversation with his parishioners, if he could well avoid it. He was emphatically a “ peace-maker,” and carefully avoided introducing or encouraging any conversation upon discordant topics in theology. PRUDENCE was the one virtue above all others by which he endeavoured to govern

* Rev. P. Smith.

his ministerial conduct ; and he had abundant opportunity to exemplify his favorite virtue in his intercourse with his parishioners and ministerial associates at that time, when discordant and unchristian spirits were laboring to sunder the bonds of religious union and church-fellowship. Some have thought and said that he carried his love of prudence to an excess ; but others have thought him a model for imitation in this respect. Prudence ceases to be a virtue, whenever, through fear of personal disadvantage, or other causes, it induces to the compromise of duty or the surrender of true principles.

Mr. Estabrook would not himself preach upon doctrines which were then warmly contested, nor did he wish others to do so in his pulpit, although they might advocate no other views than those which accorded with his own. By such management he actually kept the mass of his people ignorant of the numerous strifes and contentions which were distracting so many of the parishes in this Commonwealth.

In his theological views he sympathized more with the liberal portion of the clergy, with Channing, Buckminster, Bancroft, &c. ; yet it was his desire to cultivate friendly ministerial intercourse with all his brethren, without regard to their peculiar doctrinal tenets or denominational names. He disliked sectarian names and distinctions. He never would condescend to discuss the doctrine of the Trinity. He never wrote but *one* sermon on this subject in his life. This he preached immediately after his ordination, and repeated it word for word during the excitement relative to this doctrine which prevailed in the latter part of his ministry. He looked with no favor upon this excitement. He regretted it, and thought its tendency was to break up religious societies, and do much evil to the Christian cause. He used all the influence in his power to dissuade those of his brother ministers, who would make belief in the doctrine of the Trinity a requisite for church-fellowship, from agitating the question, and from their attempts to effect a division in the New England churches. He loved peace, and was desirous to breathe a purer and more Christian atmosphere than he thought they were generating. He used repeatedly to say, " I am neither a Trinitarian nor a Unitarian, but I am a

Bibletarian”; and there can be no do that he was liberal, catholic, and devoted in his religious sentiments.

Perhaps a correct idea of what Mr. Estabrook deemed essential to recommend one to Christian sympathy or church-fellowship may be derived from the title of the discourse which he preached at the funeral of Rev. Mr. Lee, of Royalston, and which was published at the time,—namely, “*A Good Life the Best Evidence of a Pious Heart.*”

He was distinctly opposed to the old doctrine of Total Depravity, and to the rigid Calvinistic doctrine of the Atonement. He much admired the Christian spirit of Baxter, and preferred, if he must be called by any other name than Christian, to be called a “Baxterian,” after the favorite author whose works he held in his hands when he sat for his portrait. “Calvin was no favorite of his. His sermons never savored of the ‘Five Points.’” * Indeed, he could endure nothing rigid or exclusive. His heart was too liberal and warm for that. He wished to keep free of human creeds; and he advised his brethren in the ministry to do the same. In his charge to the Rev. Luther Wilson, of Petersham, on the occasion of his installation, ten years before his death, Mr. E. used the following characteristic language:—“Let your preaching be plain and practical. Meddle not with dark and mysterious questions, which neither you nor your people can understand. Be not wise above what is written. Take the word of God for your guide, and not the commandments of men. Human creeds are not to be preferred to the Holy Scriptures. They have been the cause of much difficulty in the world.”

Mr. Estabrook could never endure the spirit of proscription which, in his day, was nurtured in the hearts of so many ministers, much to the detriment, as it seemed to him, of their Master’s spirit. “His sympathies,” writes one of his contemporaries, Rev. Mr. Harding, “were always with the proscribed. When Rev. Mr. Baily, then of Pelham,—one of the excellent of the earth,—was persecuted for heresy, having renounced the Trinity, and was expelled from the Hampshire

* Rev. Mr. Smith.

Association, Father Estabrook sought an exchange with him, and, in his old age, rode on horseback more than twenty miles to express his disapprobation of intolerance, and his sympathy for the proscribed. On his return from the exchange, he called and spent the night with me, told me where he had been, and why, saying he would go as far again to exchange with any man who was proscribed for an expression of his honest opinions, *whatever those opinions were, and however they might differ from his own*, as he would to exchange with the proscriber, though his doctrinal views might *correspond* with his own." "This," adds my informant, who knew him well, "is illustrative of his character." It is indicative also of the desire for universal Christian fellowship which he cultivated among his people, and which was so emphatically manifested in the action of the majority relative to the settlement of his successor, and which, there can be no doubt, is now cherished by a large majority of the inhabitants of this town.

Mr. E. "seemed always to dread, and would avoid, if possible, being placed in positions in which his prudence and love of peace would be severely tried and tested, and he must decide and act, and yet, when he *was* placed and found in circumstances that could not be escaped, in positions that required decision and action, difficult, unpleasant, and painful though they were, he would have the heart of a lion, and decide and act promptly, firmly, boldly. Of such promptitude in decision, such boldness in action, more than once," adds the reverend and venerable Mr. Wellington, "was I among others made a witness."

The following incident, communicated by Rev. Mr. Wilson, of Petersham, who was witness to what he narrates, illustrates Mr. Estabrook's decision, firmness, and liberality.

"At an ordination which occurred within the limits of the Association in the year 1827, Mr. Estabrook was chosen Moderator of the Ordaining Council. After the Council was organized, some clergymen entered upon an examination of the candidate as to his doctrinal views of Christianity, and finding him deficient, as they thought, in regard to native and total depravity, and the Trinity, refused to assist in his ordination.

Mr. E., seeing their determination to embarrass the proceedings of the Council, in regard to the purpose for which they were called, with great promptness and decision summoned the attention of the Council to the business for which they were convened. He remonstrated against hesitation and delay by perplexing the candidate and the people of the town with questions upon doctrines which had been subjects of controversy for centuries. For his part, he said, he should go forward, and he hoped the members would be prompt in accomplishing the business for which they were called. He declared with emphasis that they were able to ordain the candidate without the aid of those who seemed disposed to withhold their concurrence and approbation."

The Council were moved by the decision of the moderator, the one party to withdraw, the other to proceed and ordain the candidate.

To the close of his long ministry, Mr. Estabrook retained fellowship with all the neighbouring clergy, — with the Calvinistic as well as the more liberal members of the fraternity. All respected him, and none could refuse him the courtesies of ministerial intercourse, notwithstanding that, "when questions, either before the association to which he belonged, or in ecclesiastical councils of which he was a member, were to be decided by the votes of all, both Calvinists and Unitarians, at that period composing such bodies, he invariably voted with the latter, the liberal party." "I do not recollect," adds Mr. Wellington, who knew him intimately for twenty-three years, "that in any one instance his vote was recorded against them."

When asked if Mr. E. was a Unitarian, our reverend father in the liberal faith, just quoted, answers, "Sufficiently so for me." Perhaps he entertained *more liberal* views with regard to ministerial exchanges than all Unitarian clergymen would approve.

But we have no desire to fix upon him the peculiar name of any sect. No such name belongs to him. He discarded sectarian names when living, and we have no doubt that he now regards them with still greater aversion. In seeking religious intercourse, he was accustomed to be influenced, not by names,

but by principles. In this respect, as in many others, he was a pattern worthy of imitation.

As with him, so with the church over which he was minister,—it has never taken upon itself the distinctive name of any sect. It is now, as it ever has been, known as the “First Congregational Church.” May it ever cultivate the truly liberal Christian spirit of its former pastor, and never refuse its fellowship to any disciple of Christ who is earnestly and prayerfully seeking for Divine truth.

We have lengthened out our remarks upon this truly excellent man farther than was our intention. But we have found pleasure in recalling his memory, studying his character, and breathing his spirit. “It is the happy lot of few to leave a fairer name, as a Christian minister, than the Rev. Joseph Estabrook, of Athol.”* Blessed be his memory! May the influence of his noble virtues and Christian excellence long be felt by the successive generations of the town over which he was for so many years the faithful and devoted pastor!

Near together, in separate and decaying tombs, sleep the remains of the only pastors of this church which the lapse of a century has gathered to their fathers. How fitting would it be, could their ashes, enshrined in separate urns, be deposited in the earth, and a suitable monument erected to mark the spot, and tell the congregation that assembles on the next hundredth anniversary where the dust of these faithful shepherds mingles with the common dust of their slumbering flocks!

The settlement of a successor to Mr. Estabrook proved an event of no small moment to this parish and town. The truly liberal and Christian intercourse of the late pastor with all denominations had always been approved by a large majority of his parishioners; and when the occasion for settling a new pastor occurred, the general feeling was strongly in favor of securing a minister who would continue the practice of Mr. Esta-

* *Christian Register*, May, 1830.

brook, and freely fellowship with all the neighbouring Congregational ministers. Indeed, the majority thought of nothing else, and probably were not expecting any serious opposition to this Christian practice. Although Mr. Estabrook used repeatedly to say to his brethren of the clergy, that there were in town elements for *five* societies, each having a different creed, yet so carefully had he guarded his flock from the controversies of the age, that most of his hearers had not only escaped the exclusive spirit of the times, but were almost wholly ignorant of its existence. Hence, in the first meeting called for taking measures for procuring a candidate (May 3, 1830), all acted in harmony, and apparently in good faith. At that meeting a committee of five was appointed to procure a candidate for settlement, all but one of whom, as the sequel proved, were of the exclusive party; though the sentiments of some of them were misapprehended at the time of their election.

A Mr. Tillotson, from the school at New Haven, was engaged, with whose preaching no one was disposed to find any serious fault. He seemed to follow the example of the late pastor, inasmuch as he said nothing of the parties, polemics, or divisions of the day. He even gave tacit intimation, by preaching for Rev. Mr. Wilson, of Petersham, that he would be Christian in his ministerial intercourse. Presently the question as to the expediency of settling him over the church and parish began to be discussed among the inhabitants. All were not quite satisfied with the aspect of affairs. In consequence of these apprehensions, which, as subsequently appeared, were not unfounded, letters were addressed to fourteen of the neighbouring clergymen, seven of whom were of the rigid and seven of the liberal party, making inquiries whether they would exchange with the pastor who should be settled over the parish, to whichever party he might belong. Answers were received from all save one of these ministers. Those of the Calvinistic persuasion were pleased to declare, almost unanimously, that they would have no intercourse with the liberal clergymen,—one of them affirming that Unitarians were not Christians, and should not be acknowledged as such. No one of the liberal ministers objected to a free interchange of ministerial labors

with the person settled, to whichever party he might prefer to attach himself.* This information, very timely acquired, induced the inhabitants to think it necessary to proceed with caution in the selection of a candidate, lest one should be settled whose ministerial intercourse might be the opposite of what they had enjoyed during the life of their late beloved pastor. Accordingly, the committee were requested to ascertain of the candidate what would be his practice in respect to exchanges, if settled ; but they absolutely declined making any inquiries of that nature. But the inhabitants were not disposed to settle a minister till these inquiries should be made and answered ; and therefore, when a motion was made in town meeting, by the chairman of this committee, to hire the Rev. Mr. Tillotson “after the term for which he is engaged shall expire,” the town voted in the *negative*. The truth is, a liberal feeling pervaded the whole town. The people of Athol always disliked party lines and sectarian names. They believed such barriers to free religious intercourse unchristian in their influence, and detrimental to the progress of Divine truth ; and they wished for a minister whose soul was noble enough to rise above them. Any other they could not, and would not, endure. They were by no means strenuous about the candidate’s peculiar theological tenets, whether he adhered strictly to the “Five Points” of Calvinism, or was imbued with the more rational, evangelical, and spiritual faith of the Liberal Christians ; but they *were* anxious that he should possess a liberal Christian spirit, and manifest the same in his ministerial exchanges. Accordingly, the town by a large majority passed the following vote : —

“ That the town will settle no man in the ministry in the Congregational Society unless he will obligate himself, that, so long as he shall be the minister in said society, he will ex-

* These letters were addressed, and the responses to them were received, by Clough R. Miles, Esq., of Millbury, who was then an attorney at law in this town, and who rendered most timely and essential service to this society during the unhappy controversy. In the year 1843, Mr. Miles’s office was destroyed by fire, and these letters were burnt with it, — a circumstance much to be regretted, as they would be most deeply interesting documents a hundred years hence.

change ministerial labors with all the Congregational ministers in the neighbourhood, who are in regular standing, and who will exchange with him ; and that the committee chosen for the purpose of procuring a candidate ascertain this fact of a candidate before they engage him as such."

After passing this vote, the town reconsidered their former vote, not to hire Mr. Tillotson, thereby leaving it with the committee to engage *him*, if it could be done in accordance with the instructions they had received. An addition of five members having been made to the committee, and two more having been chosen to fill the places of two who had requested to be excused from further service, the committee waited upon Mr. Tillotson, and communicated to him their instructions ; but he declined making further engagements, and expressed his opinion that no other person would assent to such terms. At this stage of the controversy, the excitement seems to have become general and earnest. The minority, actuated, we will not say by what motives, — many, no doubt, by a conscientious sense of duty, — seemed determined to introduce into this town the same intolerant and exclusive spirit which had already created division and enmity in so many of the neighbouring parishes ; while the majority were no less anxious to continue the same united, harmonious, happy Christian intercourse, and unrestricted ministerial exchanges, which they had enjoyed with one another and the neighbouring clergy for nearly half a century. They were willing to enter into almost any arrangement by which so desirable a blessing could be secured. They would willingly settle a Calvinistic minister, even, provided he would exchange with Liberal Christians. But the minority would not assent ; and a town meeting was called, September 13, 1830, to see if the town would reconsider their vote relative to liberal exchanges. But when the question to reconsider was brought before the meeting, the town voted by an increased majority, 108 to 42, to require compliance with their former instructions.

So strong an expression of the prevailing liberal spirit of the inhabitants having thwarted the attempt of the rigid party to gain the control of the church and parish, the minority resolved

to effect the same unhappy division in this town, that so many other towns in the Commonwealth had already experienced ; and accordingly they withdrew from this church and parish, and engaged the Rev. Mr. Tillotson to preach to them, which he did for the space of three months, during which time means were used and influences exerted which consummated the work. The division came, and such was the lamentable feeling excited by it, that neighbours and friends, who had from childhood walked together to the same place of worship, and lived united and happy in one communion for fifty years, would now scarce exchange friendly recognitions as they passed each other in the street ! Even the children of the two societies caught the same spirit, and consequently were deterred, in many instances, from mingling together in their childish sports. O, there was a sad want of the Christian spirit somewhere ! All were not born of God, or there would have been no such bitterness in their hearts ! We charge the blame not upon one party or the other. This is not the duty we are called upon to perform this day ; and we escape it gladly. But it is our duty to record facts. History can yield to no delicacy of feeling, or personal courtesy. It must faithfully chronicle the events that are passed, and leave it to the impartial multitude that shall celebrate our next centennial anniversary, and to the Great Judge of all, to decide which party acted most in accordance with the spirit of their Master.

We will not on this occasion utter one word to revive that unchristian spirit which we believe has most happily subsided. We rejoice to believe that it has passed away, and that the feeling now existing between the two societies is of the most friendly nature. May it ever so continue ; and may the First Church and Society ever be ready, as they always have been, to extend Christian fellowship to Christians of every name, until the narrow spirit of exclusion, which has so long barred the progress of truth, shall yield to the beautiful spirit of Jesus !

At a legal town meeting, held October 29, 1830, after having heard the candidate for seven Sabbaths, the town voted

unanimously to give Rev. Josiah Moore a call to settle as a minister over the First Congregational Church and Society in Athol. One of the conditions of settlement was, that "he shall exchange ministerial labors with all the Congregational clergymen in the neighbourhood, who are of regular standing, and who will exchange with him."

The ordination of Mr. Moore took place December 8, 1830. The sermon on the occasion was preached by Rev. Alonzo Hill of Worcester. Rev. Dr. Thompson of Barre gave the charge. Rev. Luther Wilson of Petersham made the address to the society.

Rev. Mr. Moore was, at his own request, dismissed from his pastoral relations to this church, August, 1833.

He was succeeded by Rev. Linus H. Shaw, who was ordained November 12, 1834. After a ministry of less than two years, Mr. Shaw, agreeably to his request, was dismissed, August 29, 1836.

Although the society continued to have preaching the most considerable part of the time, yet it had no settled minister from the time of Mr. Shaw's dismission to the ordination of the present pastor, April 19, 1848. (R.)

Of the history of the church since the separation, it is not my purpose to speak at length. In general, it is well known. Both of its deacons and a majority of its members left it and joined the new society, which was organized November 23, 1830. The first communion that was observed under the pastoral care of Mr. Moore was on the 19th of December following his ordination. The following are the names of the persons who then appeared at the service as members of the First Church, viz. Joseph Rich, Ebenezer Stratton, Joseph Stratton, Mrs. James Young, Mrs. David Young, Mrs. Ebenezer Stratton, Mrs. Joseph Stratton, and Mrs. Steven Harwood.

The intense religious excitement which agitated almost the whole country, to a greater or less degree, some sixteen or seventeen years since, reached this town, and seriously affected this society. Since that time it has passed through some discouraging circumstances; but we are happy to believe that it

has seen the dawn of a brighter era in its history. The religious truths and principles for which it struggled and endured have gained favor with reflecting minds, and are now every day more and more pervading the entire community. Their noble, elevating, purifying influence is fast winning the love of the most devoted Christians. God grant that they may have a sanctifying influence upon all hearts ! And may this society ever remember, that nothing but a deep, earnest, elevated practical piety can ever give it usefulness or desirable permanency.

The records of the church, it is believed, are preserved entire. Some leaves have been cut out of the book, but there is no evidence that there was any writing on them when taken out. The connection is complete without them. The writing is becoming somewhat illegible. It is advisable that the proceedings of this meeting, and of the church henceforth, be recorded in a new book.

From the original gathering of the church up to the present time, it has received into its communion 384 members. Of these, 301 became members previous to the division, and 83 since that event. The annual increase of the church previous to the division was a fraction *less* than four members. Since the division, the increase has been a fraction *over* four members annually. Hence it appears that the church has flourished quite as well, so far as regards its increase of members, since the division as previous to it.

The growth of this church has always been without excitement. The town has passed through several unnatural religious excitements, and though this society has been once or twice affected by them, it never took part in, or approved of, them. We say this, not by way of reproach to any other, or in commendation of this, parish ; but simply, that the facts may be handed down to those who shall judge of our deeds a hundred years hence.

The two most remarkable excitements experienced in town were those which were felt more or less over a large portion of our country, and which were very similar in their nature, — the one known here, in popular phrase, as the “ Foote,” the other as the “ Miller ” excitement. Upon either of these we forbear

comment, or even an attempt at description. We would be charitable in our judgment, especially of the latter.

The first deacons of this church were Deacon David Twitchel and Deacon Aaron Smith, who were chosen April 25, 1754. Deacon Twitchel continued in this office more than twenty years, until November 10, 1774, when, at his own "earnest desire," he was dismissed, with a hearty expression of gratitude on the part of the church "for his faithfulness, his unwearied pains and labor, while in the office."

There is no doubt that Deacon Twitchel was a very worthy Christian. The aged people with whom I have conversed speak of him as a "good, honest man,"* — the noblest name a Christian can leave behind him, the richest legacy he can bequeathe to his posterity. Deacon Twitchel was once surprised by the Indians, and came near being taken prisoner by them in the vicinity of what is called "High Knob." He succeeded, however, in reaching the fort in safety.

Deacon Smith is also said to have been "a well-meaning man." That he was a man of considerable intelligence is evident from the prominent part which, as the records show, he took in town affairs. As there is no record that he was dismissed from it, it is probable that he held the office of deacon in the church until his death, March 9, 1798, — forty-four years.

Mr. Jesse Kendall, son of Lieutenant Samuel Kendall of Woburn, and Mr. John Haven, were chosen deacons, November 10, 1774. About twenty years later, July 20, 1795, "brothers" William Bigelow and Paul Church were chosen deacons.

Deacon Haven and Deacon Bigelow were prominent men in this town. Both were chosen delegates at different times to

* Deacon Twitchel, near the close of his life, wrote his dying advice to his wife and family, which he left as a legacy, with a request that it should be read at his funeral, and a copy transmitted to each branch of his family. The manuscript was printed, — a copy of which is now before me. The advice is eminently Christian in its character. In it occurs the following: — "I charge one and all of you, not to take any thing from, nor offer any thing to, any person, but what you think you can safely die by."

represent this town in the Provincial Congress held at Cambridge and Watertown, at different intervals, just previous to the Revolutionary war. Both Deacon Haven and Deacon Bigelow were, it is said, pretty rigid in their religious tenets, and were both active in effecting the dismissal of Rev. Mr. Humphrey.

Deacon Church is said to have been a "good and influential man."

Deacon Haven probably continued in the office of deacon until his death, July 12, 1807, at the age of 81 years.

November 24, 1807, Mr. Elijah Goddard was chosen deacon. September 7, 1818, Mr. Elijah Ballard was chosen to the same office. Deacon Goddard and Deacon Ballard continued their connection as deacons of this church up to the time when the present Calvinistic Society seceded from this, and formed a new church. Both joined the new society. Since that time there have been but two deacons of the First Church, Deacon Theodore Jones and Deacon Jonathan Stratton, who were chosen at a meeting of the church, May 25, 1835. In all, there have been ten deacons of this church during the hundred years which have elapsed since its formation.

Few churches have sustained a purer moral character than justly belongs to this. Both its first ministers were distinguished for moral worth. All its deacons have been of the first respectability among the citizens of the town. From its formation up to the present time, not a single member has ever been expelled from its communion, — a fact, it is believed, which can be said of very few sister churches of a hundred years standing. From the records, it appears that but a single person has ever been suspended from communion; and he was suspended only till "the church have further satisfaction as to his past carriage." We find record of but a single instance during the whole ecclesiastical century, in which the pastor or any other person was appointed a committee to converse with "disorderly members." It is believed that few church records will exhibit a fairer moral aspect than our own.

Four meeting-houses have been erected in this town by the

First Parish. The first was near the Old Burying Ground on "Mill Brook," as before stated. The time when it was erected or destroyed cannot now be ascertained. (M.) The second was located, as before remarked, on the Street. In it there was but one pew. This originally belonged to Dr. Lord, the first proprietors' clerk. It was the only house for public worship ever occupied by the parish until the year 1773. This house was finally sold at public vendue to Mr. John Humphrey.

The third meeting-house was erected on the common, near the present large oak-tree. It was opened for public worship on the Sabbath, the first Sunday in July, 1773. By a vote of the town, June 15th, the selectmen were directed to invite Rev. Mr. Humphrey to preach a lecture in the new meeting-house before the first Sunday in July. At first, there were no pews in this house. Each man was required to draw his "pew ground," "according to his pay to the meeting-house on his real and personal estate," and to "build his own pew." For many years after this house was built, it stood alone, surrounded by woods, apart from any dwelling. Its lonely location, and its no very tidy appearance, made it the object of frequent jests from passing strangers; while its shattered windows told of many a rude urchin's skill at stone-throwing. Occasionally, the sober people of the town would feel a little incensed on learning that some wag had "FOUND" their meeting-house, and advertised the same in the newspaper.

The house was burned, probably by an incendiary, on the night of July 2, 1827.

The house in which we are now assembled was built in the year 1828, at the expense of upwards of five thousand dollars, on land given for the purpose by Mr. Samuel Sweetser. Originally, the singers' seats were located above and back of the pulpit, at the same end of the house. Subsequently, they were arranged in the galleries opposite the pulpit. The galleries were large, and accommodated with pews, so as, above and below, to convene the whole town, as all, or nearly all, in those days, attended upon this place of worship. In the fall of 1847, the house was remodelled and repaired, and fitted up

in its present form ; the upper part being finished into a commodious hall, and disposed of to the town for a Town Hall. The house of worship below was re-dedicated December 8, 1847.

There are four principal localities where the people of Athol have buried their dead. Of these, the most ancient, most interesting, and most neglected is that on " Mill Brook," below Mr. Hapgood's match-box factory, near the spot where the first meeting-house was erected. There lie buried the bones of those who, amid the privations of the wilderness and the threatening danger from the Indians, toiled to lay the foundation of our present prosperity. There have mingled with the common dust the sinews of those strong arms that first broke the forest on these hills. There have mouldered to ashes the lips that first breathed the Christian's prayer to heaven in these uncultivated wilds. There lie Richard Morton and Robert Oliver, and other kindred friends. Neglected, forgotten, and almost unknown by their posterity, is the spot where rest the early settlers of Pequoiag. Over their graves which the wanton ploughshare has spared, a thick wood has grown up, and almost obscured the sinking mounds. The beasts of the pasture tread over this hallowed ground ! Citizens of Athol ! shall no fence inclose and no monument mark the sacred spot where sleep the venerable fathers of this town, and the reverend founders of this church ?

The graveyard in what was formerly called " West Pequoiag," on the west side of Miller's River, near the covered bridge, ranks next for its antiquity and sacred reminiscences. In this sleep the remains of the unfortunate Wallingford, who fell a victim to the tomahawk and scalping-knife. Hence it is evident that this must have been a place of interment as early as August, 1746. The land contained in this yard was given for a burying ground by Samuel Morton, one of the first five settlers, and one of the founders of this church.

Many hallowed associations and sacred remembrances will long cluster around the old burying ground, in the middle of the town. Here rest the earthly remains of the venerable pastors of this church, and around moulder their slumbering

flocks. The stone which marks the grave of Calvin Humphrey, a son of the first minister, who died November 29, 1773, bears the earliest date which I find engraven in this yard.

The first interments in the new cemetery were made May 25, 1843. Five bodies were then removed from a tomb in the old yard, in which they had been temporarily deposited, and were committed to their final resting-place in the new ground. This cemetery is overshadowed with a beautiful growth of native pines, and adorned with many flowers. It is a lovely spot, well calculated to dissipate the unspiritual gloom that has been suffered to enshroud the graves of departed friends.

Had I time, gladly would I rehearse what tradition has preserved relative to the remnant of the Indian tribe that lingered latest on the banks of the Pequoia. Here lived a portion of the Nipnets.* Konkeput was their chief. They built their council-fires on these plains. They gathered the wild grain on these meadows. They hunted the deer on these hills. Here they gave their sons and daughters in marriage, and here they buried the bones of their fathers. Relics of these noble men yet remain, — their pestles and arrows, and other rude implements of husbandry and war. Traces of their wigwams are yet visible to the searching eye. But that once happy tribe is gone, — faded away like the lingering shades of night before the brighter beams of the coming day. If any one has a love for their memory, and would seek the fittest spot to cherish it, let him, at the close of day, when the setting sun, as now, is lengthening the hill shadows over the village meadows, follow along the banks of Tully Brook, till, about a mile, or less, from its mouth, he shall pause by a small green plat of ground encompassed by the divided stream. This is “Huncus’s Island.” Here lived, here died Huncus, the last of the Nipnets.

Again our minds revert to the early settlers of Pequoia. Since those men first kindled their fires, ate their evening meal, and laid themselves down to rest beneath the silent shade of the

* Such is the tradition.

tall pines that then covered these hills and vales, how great the change ! They woke to action. The strokes of their axe are heard breaking the stillness of these ancient wilds. Trees fall beneath those strong-nerved arms. The crash echoes from hill to hill, and dies away in the forest. The smoke of their clearing-fires rolls up from numerous openings. The red man retires from his hunting-grounds on these meadows. His wigwam gives place to the abodes of civilization. By the falls where he speared the salmon and the shad rumbles the corn-mill of the settlers. Domestic flocks now graze where lately the wild deer browsed. The Indian's path becomes a highway for our fathers. The church and the school nurture intelligence and virtue. Agriculture and the mechanic arts are fast multiplying the comforts of life. The turnpike opens, and new energy, activity, and enterprise flow into our town. The stage-coach rolls along the new-made road ; and then the dashing car comes screaming by, winding round our hills and darting over our plains. 'T is really so. All this is no dream. 'T is but the tale a hundred years has told.

The century has closed. A hundred years of our religious history have gone by. On this, too, we can look back and note progress. The brightening light of truth has shone constantly in upon prayerful souls. Superstition is gradually following the departed gloom of the forest. The nobler influence of reason is dissipating the dwarfing prejudices of the mind. Creeds are crumbling into sand, and freed spirits are rising towards heaven. During the hundred years since this church was formed, a change has come over the theological world. The old doctrines of Infant Damnation, a literal Hell, and Total Depravity, — where are they ? Gone from enlightened minds, where many doctrines, no less absurd, now deemed essential to Christian fellowship by some, will have gone ere another century shall have passed away. Gone to be numbered with the superstitious dogmas that have sadly retarded the progress of Christian truth. Nobler views of God and Christianity and human duty are gladdening the hearts of mankind, and gradually permeating all religious sects. A more rational

faith, and a more earnest, vital piety, are exalting the human soul nearer to the Divine. The religious community has made progress, and yet its progress is onward. The day is only dawning. The broad sunlight of truth has not yet shone in upon any church. But the star of promise is brightening. The Antichristian spirit of intolerance, that worst emanation from the Roman Church, is fast losing its influence in the land of the Pilgrims. Men of God have long felt its unholy blight, and mourned over it. Angels have shed tears over the divisions it has caused in churches and families. We rejoice to believe that this spirit has had its reign. Long, long will it be deplored. But as those designing minds who were instrumental in giving it dominion for a season, in our churches, over the love of God and the spirit of Christ, have mostly gone to their reward, no word of ours shall add a pang to the gnawings of that undying remorse which must for ever prey upon their awakened consciences. Their punishment, as they look up into the sweet, benignant countenance of Jesus, and feel that they were the opposers of his love on the earth, must be greater than they can bear. Over their failings we would cast the mantle of charity, remembering that we, too, are human. May the Father of mercies deal gently with them ; and may the Saviour once more raise to heaven his last prayer on the earth, — “ Father, forgive them, for they knew not what they did ! ” We thank God that every year is freeing us more and more from their unholy influence.

We pause. Another century of our history has commenced. Before it shall close what unlooked for events will have come and gone ! what changes will have taken place ! what deeds have been accomplished ! what new truths revealed ! Then, as now, indeed, the rapid Pequoiag will roll its noisy tide on to the Connecticut ; these hills shall cast their shadows over the valleys beneath ; the sun shall rise and set, and the clouds give down their refreshing rains. All else how changed ! You and I will have passed away. Not one of this dense congregation shall be spared to tell of our meeting. Ere then our mouldering dust shall nurture the growth of the

tall pines in yonder cemetery. Like our fathers, many, many of us will be forgotten by the busy throng that shall then move where are now our happy homes.

But so let us live, ever submitting our minds and hearts to the divine influences with which Heaven is surrounding us, that, when we shall be numbered with the congregation of the departed, we may leave a sacred inheritance of intelligence, virtue, faith, and truth, to bless our children and our children's children to the latest generation that shall come after us.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

A. (Page 5.)

IN writing the Indian name of this river and town, I have, in the Discourse, followed the orthography adopted by Rev. Abraham Hill, proprietors' clerk, in the Proprietors' Book of Records; not because I consider this the most in accordance with the probable Indian pronunciation of the word, but rather because it is most in harmony with the pronunciation which has gained currency in town. I have noticed very many different modes of spelling the word. The first proprietors' clerk, Dr. Joseph Lord, in an agreement dated May, 1737, and in several other documents of later date, now before me, wrote the name of this town Poquoiaq. The first minister, Rev. Mr. Humphrey, on the Church Book, invariably wrote it Perquage. In the original grant it is written Paquoag. The original plan of the town has it Poquioug. Whitney gives Payquage and Pequiog; Barber, *Hist. Col.*, Peyquage. Savage, in 2d Vol. Winthrop's *Journal*, spells it Poquaig. Note to Topographical View of Templeton, *Worcester Magazine*, Vol. I. p. 117, gives as the proper authority Payquaog. Mrs. Rowlandson, who crossed the river more than once in company with the Indians, and who, without doubt, spelled the name from their pronunciation of it, as correctly as she was able, writes it Bayquage. Probably there is no positive rule for spelling Indian names.

B. (Page 6.)

WHITNEY, in his *History of Worcester County*, says, "When the grant of this township was made by the General Court, cannot

now be ascertained"; and in no published account of Athol, which I have seen, are the conditions or the date of the grant established. But, by the kindness of the Secretary of State, Hon. W. B. Calhoun, I have been furnished with the following copy from the State Records : —

" In Council, Friday, April 20, 1733.

" The following vote passed both Houses in July last, viz. : —

" In answer to that part of His Excellency's Speech which relates to the ungranted Lands of the Province. — Upon consideration y^e Power is given the General Assembly to grant Lands especially for the Planting or Settling of the province and that by the Great Increase of His Majesty's good subjects, many that are inclined to Industry have not been able to obtain Lands for the employm^t of themselves and families and great numbers have removed to neighbouring Colonies for their accommodation. — Voted, that there be four towns opened of the Contents of six miles square Each, viz. One at Paquoag on Miller's River, Two on Ashuelot River above Northfield — the other in the Eastern Country at the Head of Berwick, all to be surveyed in October or November next at furthest by the Direction of Comm^{tees} to be appointed by the General Court and their several Surveys to be reported at the Fall Session and the Charge of the Comm^{tee} and Survey to be paid out of the Public Treasury y^t Comm^{tees} be appointed to admit Settlers and to lay out the House Lots so that y^e Settlem^{ts} may be made in a Defensible manner and to direct in the drawing thereof, but not to lay out any other Divisions without further Directions from this Court. Each Home Lot to consist of so many acres as the Court shall Order. After Report is made of the Quality and other Circumstances of the Land, the Comm^{tees} to be paid as the Court shall order, that there be Sixty three House Lots laid out in Each Township, One for the first settled Minister, One for the ministry, one for the School and one for each of the Sixty Settlers who shall settle thereon in his own person or by one of his Children. The rest of the land to be allotted or divided equally into Sixty three parts; That one Year be allowed from the Survey for the Admission of Settlers, and that the Comm^{tee} be directed to demand and receive from Each Settler at his admission Five pounds part of which shall be employed for reimbursing the Province the money to be advanced for paying the Committee and the charge of the Survey,

the remaining part to be employed for building Houses for Publick Worship or otherwise as the General Court shall Order. That Each Settler actually live on his land within three years from his admission, build an House on his land of Eighteen feet square and seven feet stud at the least and within the same time do sufficiently fence in and till or fit for mowing Eight acres of land, Each Settler to have his Land on Condition that he perform the foregoing injunctions and in case any Settler fail of performance in the whole or in part, his Right to be forfeited and such Land shall revert to the province and the Comm^{tee} to be appointed to admit Settlers are directed at the time of admission to take a Bond of Twenty Pounds of each Settler to be paid to them or their successors for the use and benefit of the Settlers, in case he fail of performing the Several conditions and Injunctions before mentioned and that the Settlers in each Town to be obliged to build a suitable meeting house and to settle a learned Orthodox minister in such town within the space of five years from the admission of the Settlers.

"Consented to

J. BELCHER."

C. (Page 6.)

"THE following is a List of the Names of the men admitted by the Hon^{ble} William Dudley, Chairman of the Com^{ee} and others, the Great and General Court's Committee, to draw House Lotts in the Township of Pequoiag on Miller's River, on the 26 of June 1734 at Concord, as Settlers of said Pequoiag:—

Names of Men.	Side of the River.	Side of the High Way.	Number of the Lotts.	Names of Men.	Side of the River.	Side of the High Way.	Number of the Lotts.
Edward Goddard,	East,	East,	13	John Wood,	East,	East,	1
Daniel Epps Jun.,	"	West,	11	Benj. Townsend,	West,	"	10
Daniel Epps Son.,	"	East,	9	Jonathan Morton,	"	West,	2
Ebenezer Goddard,	"	West,	4	Joseph Smith,	East,	East,	6
Zechariah Field,	"	"	18	William Oliver,	"	"	10
Nehemiah Wright,	West,	"	7	Moses Dickinson,	West,	"	9
Richard Wheeler,	"	"	12	Joshua Dickinson,	"	"	13
Richard Morton,	East,	"	9	James Kellogg,	West,	"	7
Samuel Morton,	West,	"	1	Richard Crouch,	East,	West,	12
Ephraim Smith,	"	"	3	Ezekiel Wallingford,	West,	"	10
Nathan Waite,	East,	"	15	James Jones,	"	East,	4

Names of Men.	Side of the River.	Side of the High Way.	Number of the Lots.	Names of Men.	Side of the River.	Side of the High Way.	Number of the Lots.
Charles Duharthy,	West,	West,	13	John Grout,	West,	East,	12
Gad Waite,	"	East,	3	Daniel Adams,	"	West,	5
Joseph Lord,	East,	"	3	John Cutting,	East,	"	17
Benoni Twichel,	"	West,	10	Samuel Kendall,	West,	East,	6
John Wallis,	"	East,	7	"	East,	"	2
Samuel Willard,	"	West,	7	Jonathan Page,	"	West,	14
John Smeed,	West,	East,	5	John Longley,	"	East,	4
William Chandler,	East,	West,	6	Joseph Brown,	"	West,	5
Jonathan Marble,	West,	"	11	John Child,	"	East,	11
William Higgens,	East,	East,	8	Nathaniel Graves,	"	"	12
James Kenney,	West,	West,	9	George Danforth,	West,	"	14
Abner Lee,	East,	West,	1	James Fay,	"	West,	8
Abraham Nutt,	West,	East,	2	Capt. Jos. Bowman,	"	"	4
John Headly,	East,	West,	2	Francis Bowman,	East,	"	13
Isaac Fisk,	"	East,	5	Stephen Fay,	West,	East,	16
Daniel Fisk,	West,	"	1	Israel Hamond,	"	"	15
Thomas Hapgood,	East,	West,	16	Benjamin Bancroft,	"	West,	14
Richard Ward,	West,	"	6	Joseph Harrington,	East,	"	3
Samuel Tenney,	"	East,	8	James Holden,	West,	East,	11

"N. B. I transcribed the above from a List under the Hand of Joseph Lord, who made oath to the Truth of it, and adds the following.

"N. B. viz. This above mentioned List is what the Clerk of Pequoiag has always made use of for want of an attested Copy ; and also entered in their Book of Records without attest.

"The above entered per A. Hill, Prop^{ts} Clerk, Augst 24, 1761."

(See Proprietors' Book of Records, p. 2.)

The Pequoiag received the name of Miller's River, according to tradition and Whitney's *History of Worcester County*, from the circumstance, that a man by the name of Miller was drowned in it near a hundred and fifty years ago in attempting to cross it on his way to Northfield.

Tully Brook, so called, derived its name, tradition says, from an Indian's dog, which, in following a deer, drove the animal over the meadows into this stream, where the flying stag, turning, made a bold stand ; upon which the faithful dog made an attempt to seize his prey, but the deer, striking him with his foot, dashed him under water, and there held poor Tully till he was drowned. Hence the name of the stream.

D. (Page 6.)

My authority for the precise date of the arrival of the first inhabitants of this town is a manuscript "Memorandum of the First Settlers, taken from the best authority that can be obtained from the oldest inhabitants," by James Humphrey, Esq., son of the first minister of the town, which manuscript, in the handwriting of Mr. Humphrey, by the kindness of his son, the present Mr. James Humphrey of this town, by whom it is preserved, is now before me. To the same source I am also indebted for the names of the first five settlers, the place from which they came, and the fact that they were obliged to resort there for provision, as stated in the Discourse. Mr. Humphrey may be considered sufficient authority for these facts, since, as stated in the manuscript, he was personally and familiarly acquainted with some of these early settlers, and derived his information from them. The date of the settlement of the town, as noted by Mr. Humphrey, is corroborated by other dates in the same manuscript, and by other reliable authority. There is a tradition in the Morton and Lord families, that at least three sons were born here during the first winter after the arrival of the first settlers, viz. Abraham Morton, son of Richard Morton, Abner Morton, son of Samuel Morton, and Thomas Lord, son of Joseph Lord.

In Mr. Humphrey's MS. it is noted that Abner Morton was born January 8, 1736, and died April, 1823, in the 88th year of his age; which statistics corroborate the date of settlement. In a manuscript memorandum of the first settlement of the town, noted by Mr. Alden Spooner, as dictated by Asa Lord (October 1, 1845), who was born at Pequoiag, October 1, 1761, and was son of Thomas Lord, it is stated that Thomas Lord, the father of Mr. Spooner's informant, "was born in January the next year after the arrival of his parents at Pequoiag," and that he "died, November, 1810, aged seventy-five years, *minus one month and fourteen days.*" The Church Book has the following record:—"Athol, December 3, 1810. Died Thomas Lord, aged 75 years." There is a slight discrepancy between the two records, but the one agrees with the other so far as is necessary to corroborate the date of the arrival of the first settlers in town, as given by Mr. Humphrey in the manuscript before me, viz. September 17, 1735.

E. (Page 7.)

My authorities for the names of these later settlers, and the other facts stated in the paragraph from which reference is made to this note, are Mr. Spooner's manuscript before referred to, Proprietors' Book, Church Records, and traditionary accounts received from some of the oldest native citizens now living in town. Besides these is a Letter of Attorney, now before me, given to Robert Young by one William Hagan, of Holliston, dated May 4, 1736, authorizing said "Robert Young of Holliston aforesaid, weaver," to take entire charge of house-lots and other lands belonging to said Hagan, and lying "in the new Township called or known by the name of Pequaioq." The date of this instrument, considering the purpose for which it was given, renders it very probable that Mr. Young settled here in the spring or summer of the year 1736.

F. (Page 13.)

BESIDES those mentioned in the Discourse, several others belonging to this town suffered in consequence of the Indian troubles.

Mr. Samuel Graves, son of Eleazer Graves, during the French and Indian war, enlisted into the army and died in the service at Crown Point, November 20, 1759.

Mr. Adonijah Ball, son of Isaac and Rachel Ball, also a soldier at Crown Point, died at Saratoga, on his way home from the army, in the year 1760. (Church Records.)

Abraham, Morton, son of Richard Morton, and the first white child born in this town, enlisted into the service, under Colonel Rogers, and engaged with him in the expedition against Canada. He never returned. Tradition says, that, after Rogers's defeat, the party to which Morton belonged, on their return home, being out of provision, came near starving, and that the strong probability is, the party drew lots to determine who of their number should yield his body to save the rest from famishing. It is supposed that the lot fell upon Mr. Morton, and that he suffered death in consequence.

I have set this tradition down as I have it from Mr. Jeremiah Morton, who received it many years ago from an old gentleman who was one of Rogers's men, and who with others separated from Morton's party after the agreement was made by that party to draw lots. The report of a gun soon after, together with the fact that Morton has never since been heard of, is the evidence on which rests the supposition of his unhappy fate.

G. (Page 14.)

THIS Mr. Samuel Kendall was from Woburn, where he was born, October 29, 1682, son of Thomas and Ruth Kendall. He was a man of great activity and enterprise, well known as Lieutenant Kendall, having received a lieutenant's commission from Governor Belcher, October 5, 1732. He was an extensive land-owner in his native town, and was also an original proprietor of North Town, or Townsend. He was likewise an original proprietor of Pequoia, and one of the principal men among the early settlers of this town. Here he and several of his sons suffered from flood and from depredations of the Indians in the French war between the years 1744 and 1760. He was a carpenter by trade, and was a man who did good service in the early settlement of this town. He died at Woburn, December 13, 1764. (MS. Genealogy of Kendall Family.) Probably he never was a resident of this town for any considerable length of time, if at all.

H. (Page 14.)

AN agreement to build a *saw-mill* had *previously* been made by the proprietors with a son of Mr. Kendall, as appears from the following declaration, in the handwriting of the first proprietors' clerk, which I found in a bag of old papers now in the possession of Mr. Lyman Kendall of this town. The signatures appear to be the genuine autographs of the subscribers.

“ Poquoiag, May 24, 1737.

“ We the Subscribers John Smeed and Joshua Dickinson being chosen a Committee for y^e Proprietors of Poquoiag for agreeing with some men for building of Mills and we having agreed with Samuel Kendall junr. of Woburn for building a Saw mill and covenanted with him to take 50 acres of Land as part of pay or Encouragement the said Samuel Kendall has at his own choice taken up said land of 50 acres upon the North side of the Mill brook down stream, by bounding it with 2 corners begining at a Pine tree marked S. K. on y^e Northwardly side being on brow or side of a little Pine hill a little westward of the Pond, from thence running westwardly over said Mill brook down toward the great river to a little pond hole, then turning Northwardly near the hopfield, then turning Eastwardly, pr running till it Encompass all fifty acres by closing with the pine tree first mentioned where it began.

[Signed]

JOHN SMEED.

JOSHUA DICKINSON.

“ A true Copy. Attest, Pr. JOSEPH LORD, Propr. Clerk.”

‘There is no record bearing so early a date as this upon the present Proprietors’ Book.

I. (Page 14.)

It is a matter of doubt where the saw or grist mill was first erected. Very early in the settlement of the town there was a grist-mill and saw-mill on the spot where Mr. Knowlton’s shop is now located. It is even perhaps quite doubtful whether the first mill was located on Miller’s River; for according to the agreement adduced in Note H, “ Mill Brook ” was so called as early as 1737, when said agreement was made. Whether it was so called from the circumstance that a mill had been previously built on it, or because it afforded numerous seats for mills, or from some other cause, I have been unable to determine. January 3, 1759, the proprietors voted not to build the grist-mill on “ Mill Brook, so called,” but “ at the ‘ Old Mill Place,’ so called ” (Proprietors’ Book, p. 144), from which it may be inferred that the oldest mill place was not on Mill Brook.

J. (Page 14.)

BUT although Mr. Lee was nominally clerk, Mr. Lord, it seems, was virtually so, and continued to act in that capacity up to the year 1758, retaining in his possession all the books, papers, &c. (See Prop. Book, p. 135; also, Petition to Gen. Court, Note L.)

It appears that there was no other man in the settlement who was capable of properly discharging the duties of proprietors' clerk; and when Dr. Lord proved himself not trustworthy, the proprietors seem to have been obliged to seek a clerk in some other place.

K. (Page 15.)

By the records of the Court of Common Pleas for this county, November term, 1759, it appears that the action in favor of "the Proprietors of y^e common and undivided Lands in said new township called Poquioge" against "Joseph Lord of the new township called *Poquioge* in *sd.* county, Physician," was referred to "the Honb^{le} John Chandler, Esq^r John Worthington, Esq^r and Mr. Benja. Kent," who made a report on which judgment was rendered by the Court as follows:—

"It is therefore considered by the Court that the said report be accepted, and that the said Joseph Lord shall within six days from this time deliver up to *sd.* Proprietors the Books, Records &c sued for together with all Records Papers Plans and Writings which the said Joseph hath in his hands as Clerk of *sd.* Proprietors to the *Committee* of *sd.* Proprietors appointed to receive the same and pay cost of Reference and cost of suit, and upon the Failure thereof that the said Proprietors recover against the said Joseph Lord one Thousand Pounds *Lawful* money Damage and cost of suit and cost of Reference Taxed at in y^e whole y^e sum of £ 23 : 8. 1— and that Ex'on. Issue out accordingly in four days after the *sd.* Joseph Lord has had notice of this Judgment and the Clerk certified thereof.

"Exon. *Issued* 16. Nov. 1759. for £ 1000. 0. 0 Da.

23: 8. 1 cost, D. D.

Caldwell."

The above record has been kindly furnished me by the present Clerk of the Courts for this county, Charles W. Hartshorn, Esq.

L. (Page 15.)

REV. ABRAHAM HILL, of Shutesbury, then Road Town, succeeded Mr. Lord as clerk of the proprietors. He was a man well qualified for the office, as the present Proprietors' Book of Records made out by him will bear ample testimony. He held the office of clerk four years, during which time he continued to reside at Road Town. Subsequently, when the troubles preliminary to the Revolution assumed a serious aspect, Mr. Hill proved unfriendly "to the American cause." (Barber's *Hist. Col.*)

In consequence of the loss of the records, the proprietors appointed Mr. Hill chairman of a committee to draft and present the following petition to the General Court.*

"To the honble Thomas Hutchinson, Esq" lieutenant Governor and Commander in chief in and over the province of the Massachusetts Bay the honble his majesty's council and the honble house of Representatives in General Court assembled, June 1760.

"The Proprietors of the common and undivided lands in Pequoiag so called in the County of Worcester — humbly show.

"That the said place called Pequoiag hath been settled upwards of twenty years hath at this time near fifty families and hath had a minister settled about ten years.

"That from the beginning of the Settlement till about two years ago Joseph Lord Esq" acted as Proprietors' Clerk and kept all the records and proceedings of said propriety all the grants surveys and laying out of land within the same he was also treasurer the greater part of the time, and received all the monies collected by taxes or for sales of delinquent proprietors land and is probably supposed to be largely arrear to them on that account.

"That in June 1758 a new treasurer and a new clerk were chosen and the s^d Joseph Lord refusing to deliver up the books and papers of the propriety an action was commenced against him therefor and at the inferiour Court held at Worcester in November last the proprietors recovered judgment for the said books and

* For this petition I am obliged to the Secretary of State, by whose kindness it has been copied for me from the original in the Secretary's Office at Bos on.

papers to be delivered to them or in default thereof execution to issue for the sum of one thousand pounds, lawful money.

"But before the said judgement was rendered the said Joseph Lord absconded and hath ever since been out of this province hath never delivered up the s^d books and papers but keeps the same nor hath left estate to a quarter part of the damage recovered.

"Thus the petitioners are deprived of their records and those who hold their several possessions as original proprietors or have purchased the lands of delinquent proprietors left without their proper and needful proofs and we are in the utmost danger of running into total confusion.

"The petitioners therefore humbly apply to this honble Court for direction and relief in a case so singularly circumstanced and wherein they are without remedy in the common course of law, and pray your honours consideration of their premises and that you will grant such direction and relief therein as to your wisdom shall seem meet.

"And as in duty bound shall ever pray &c.

ABRAHAM HILL } Comttee of s^d proprietors
JOHN CALDWELL } and by their order."

"In the House of Rep^lves June 11, 1760.

"Read and Ordered that the Prayer of the Pet^{rs} be so far granted as that the Pet^{rs} be allowed to bring in a Bill for the purposes mentioned.

"Sent up for concurrence.

"JAMES OTIS, Speaker.

"In Council, June 11, 1760 : Read and Concurred.

"A. OLIVER, Sec^y."

"In Council, Wednesday June 18th 1760.

"Read and Reconsidered and Nonconcurrent, and Resolved that the present clerk of the said Proprietors, the Rev^d Mr. Abraham Hill be, and hereby is directed to make a new Book of the Records of said Proprietors, during the time that the said Joseph Lord was Proprietor's Clerk, from the minits that may appear of Transactions in that time, and from the Remembrance of the Proprietors, and after he hath finished the same that he lay it before the said Proprietors, at some Proper meeting for that purpose warned and then that he do lay the same before this Court. To the end this

Court may then determine whether it shall be established as the Records of the said Propriety.

“ In the House of Representatives : Read and concurred
 “ Consented to by the Lieutenant Governor.”

M. (Pages 16, 61.)

IN what year this house was built, in consequence of the loss of the records, cannot now be ascertained. That it was *not* previous to the year 1741 is inferred from an original plan and description of “ fifty-eight acres of land ” lying on both sides of “ Mill Brook ” (which document was found, since the delivery of the Discourse, in the bag of old papers referred to in Note H), surveyed and laid out by Abner Lee, agreeably to a vote of the proprietors, “ September y^e 2d. 1741,” “ and to y^e election and choice of L^t Samuel Kindle,” “ on the original Right of Jonathan Marble, No. 30, y^e eight acres to Lyee in *common* for a *Buring Place* and *Meeting house place*, if y^e Proprietors shall think proper to put them too.”

At this meeting of the proprietors, held September 2, 1741, it was voted (as certified by Mr. Lee in a statement preliminary to the description of the plan alluded to above) that they would lay out *fifty* acres of land to *each* right. In *this* lot were included *fifty-eight* acres ; “ *y^e Eight* ” to lie common for a “ Meeting house Place,” &c., thus leaving to Mr. Kendall the same number of acres in his lot which were laid to the other rights. Hence, since the eight acres were to lie in common on the condition that the proprietors should think proper to occupy the lot for a “ meeting house place,” &c., it is probable that the land was not *then* so occupied.

N. (Page 22.)

CHURCH COVENANT.

“ WE do first of all Confess ourselves Unworthy of such a favor as to be called into the Church State of the Gospel, and admire the free and Rich grace of God which Calls Us.

“ We confess our Original Guilt and Pollution and the Sins of our Lives and Profess A hearty Repentance of all our Sins, Wherein we have offended the holy God.

“ We do humbly and thankfully Lay hold of the Covenant of grace and Promise of Pardon and Peace therein, and this we Do Under A Due Sense of our own Insufficiency and Inability to that which is good and acceptable to God, on account of our Sinfulness and Proneness to offend the most high and holy God in heart and life through the Prevalency of sin in Us, and manifold Temptations without Us.

“ We do now Solemnly Enter into Covenant With God and one another in God, With a humble and Entire Dependence on the Promised Grace of the Covenant Unto the faithful.

“ We Profess and Declare our Serious and hearty Belief of the Christian Religion as it is Contained in the holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. We acknowledge the Sacred Oracles Do Comprise the Whole revealed Will of God respecting what we are to Believe and what we are to Do, in order to obtain acceptance with God and Complete Liberty in him and we resolve by his grace to conform our hearts and lives Unto this Divine Revelation as the Only rule and Perfect Platform of our holy Religion.

“ We give up ourselves unto the Lord Jehovah, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, ye one only Living and true God, and avouch him this Day to be our God and our Portion forever.

“ We give up ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ who is God-Man and only Mediator of the Covenant. We acknowldige him in his Sacred offices of Prophet, Priest and King, and head of his People in the Covenant, and We promise by his Grace to adhere unto him as such by faith and Gospel Obedience as it Becomes his Covenant-People.

“ We give up ourselves to the holy Spirit, as our Sanctifier, Comfortor and Guide In and by the Blessed Word of God Written by his Inspiration.

“ We acknowledge our Indispensable Oligation to Glorify our God in all ye Duties of a Good, Sober and Righteous Life and Particularly in the Duties of a Church State as a body of People associated for Obedience to him In all the Ordinances of ye Gospel.

“ We engage, (With Dependance on his Promised grace) to Walk together as a Church of the Lord Jesus Christ In the faith and order

of the Gospel — To keep the Lord's Day holy to him, and attend the Publick Worship of God thereon, Praying to him, Singing Praise and giving reverend attention to his Word read and Preached, according to his Justification — To hold Communion With Each other In the administration of the Seal of the Covenant, Baptism and ye Lord's Supper — To Submit to the holy Discipline appointed by Christ in his Church, Obeying them yt are over us in the Lord.

“To Walk in Love one With another Endeavoring our Mutual Edification and Comfort, Carefully Minding the Rules of Christ and his apostles in Church Matters, and Watchfully avoiding Sinful Stumbling Blocks and Contentions, or giving occasion of offence to our Brethren.

“Furthermore We Do give up our Children, with ourselves, to the Lord, and Promise by the Grace of God to Walk In our houses in the fear of God ; Maintaining his Worship, and reading the holy Scriptures and Training up all ym of our Charge in the Faith of holiness and virtue.

“And all this we Profess and Promise and Do, flying to the Blood of the Covenant for the Pardon of our Sins and Praying that the glorious Lord Jesus the Great Shepard and head of Influences would, by his Spirit Prepare and Strengthen Us for Every Good Word to Do his Will working in us that which is Well Pleasing in his sight. To whom be Glory for Ever — Amen.”

This covenant was used by the church, without any alteration, after Mr. Humphrey's dismissal, till the close of Mr. Estabrook's ministry. Of course it was not very strictly construed. It was a kind of bond of union for the church, and probably was regarded as such rather than as a test of doctrinal belief. So we would have all church covenants regarded ; for, indeed, according to our idea of a church, doctrines which are matters of dispute among Christians should have no place in the covenant. A Christian church should be kept entirely free from all controverted topics in theology. It should be neutral ground, where all devoted Christians who are desirous to cultivate more of their Master's Divine spirit in their own bosoms can meet and hold religious communion with each other, each one undisturbed in his own peculiar theological belief. The church should never be circumscribed with a creed, and its privileges for spiritual culture barred to all who differ a shade in their

belief from him who happened to write the covenant. To so pervert the church from its heavenly purpose is to limit and vastly contract its sphere of spiritual influence. We rejoice that the fathers of this church did not so limit the bond of their ecclesiastical union.

O. (Page 23.)

By the kindness of Deacon Henry Humphreys, of Dorchester, who has in his possession a manuscript genealogy of the Humphreys, I am enabled to give the ancestral lineage of the first minister of Pequoiag, viz. : — “ Rev. James Humphrey was son of Jonas, who was the son of Hopestill, who was the son of Elder James, who came with his father Jonas from England in the year 1634.” Hence it appears that Rev. James Humphrey was great-grandson to Elder James H., upon whose monument in the ancient graveyard in Dorchester is the following inscription : —

“ Elder James Humphreys, who died May 12, 1686, aged 78.

“ Inclosed within this shrine is sacred dust,
And only waits for the rising of the just.
Most useful while he lived ; adorned his station,
Even to old age he serv'd his generation :
Since his death thought of with great veneration.

“ How great a blessing this Ruling Elder he
Unto the Church and Town and Pastors three.
Mather he first did by him help receive ;
Flint he did next of burdens much relieve ;
Renowned Danforth he did help with skill.
Esteemed high by all ; — bear fruit until
Yielding to death his glorious seat did fill.”

(Barber's *Hist. Col.*, p. 467.)

P. (Page 29.)

THERE were a few people in this town who, in connection with persons belonging to Royalston, formed a Baptist Society, which

met "for religious worship on the Lord's Day in Royalston and Athol" as early as 1774, as appears from certificates of membership recorded on the Town Book. In the following year they appear to have met regularly in Athol. The names of only fourteen persons appear, at this date, as members.

The present Baptist Church was organized April 13, 1813. A branch to the Baptist Church in Templeton was organized in this town June 4, 1810. (Town Records, p. 91. Bap. Ch. Records.)

Q. (Page 34.)

THE bantering tone of this vote will be better understood when it is known that the town had previously (1780, March 6th and 20th) by two distinct votes refused to "make Mr. Humphrey *any consideration*" on account of the *depreciation* of the currency, or to pay "*one half*" of what was due him of his salary "in the *old way*, viz. in grain, wool, flax, cheese, &c. &c."

How much the currency had depreciated, and likewise how much Mr. Humphrey's stipulated salary had diminished in consequence, will appear from the fact, that the town, this same year, in making provision for purchasing clothing for the Continental army, agreed to "give *sixty* pounds for a blanket, *thirty-six* pounds for a pair of shoes, *thirty* pounds for a shirt, and *twenty* pounds for a pair of stockings." Mr. Humphrey's salary was a trifle over *fifty-two* pounds per annum.

It must, however, be remembered that the town, as well as their minister, suffered from the depreciation, though probably not so severely.

R. (Page 57.)

AFTER the dismissal of Rev. Mr. Shaw, August, 1836, the pulpit of the First Society was supplied by different clergymen in the

vicinity, who could be engaged for a few Sabbaths at a time, till November, 1838, when Rev. Stephen A. Barnard was engaged, and continued to preach to the society until May, 1840. From this date the society was destitute of a minister, and the pulpit supplied by different preachers, until May 1, 1842, when Rev. Crawford Nightingale was engaged, and continued to preach here about two years. After Mr. Nightingale left, the society was again supplied with preaching by different ministers in the vicinity until May 18, 1845, when Rev. E. J. Gerry was engaged for one year.

From the expiration of Mr. Gerry's engagement the pulpit was, part of the time, supplied by neighbouring preachers as they could be obtained, and money raised to pay them, and part of the time the society was destitute of preaching, till July, 1847, when the present pastor was engaged to preach alternately half of the time to this society and half of the time to the society in Warwick, which he did for nine months. At the expiration of which time he was invited to become the pastor of this church and society, and was ordained April 19, 1848.

Since he commenced the duties of minister to this parish, the people of the society have manifested an earnest desire to sustain constant religious teaching on the Sabbath. His efforts have been seconded by their hearty coöperation. Success has been the result. The house of worship has been remodelled, and neatly furnished; and by the kindness of a benevolent lady of the parish, Mrs. Lydia Noyes, an excellent organ has been placed in it. The congregation has very much increased in numbers, and it continues to give evidence of an increasing interest in vital Christianity. Our Sabbath school does, and promises, well. Large additions have been made to its libraries within a few years, which now number between five and six hundred volumes. The kind feeling which has been manifested by the people of the parish towards their minister has rendered his most difficult labors pleasant, and cheered him on in the discharge of his duties. Let the same interest and effort continue to increase, and increasing prosperity and usefulness will continue to smile upon this society.

NOTE I.

THIS town took an active part in resisting the oppressive policy of Great Britain, and in carrying on the Revolutionary war. There appear to have been very few of its inhabitants who were opposed to the "American cause."

The "coming event" seems to have "cast its shadow before" unto this place as early as May, 1770, when the inhabitants appropriated "six pounds to provide a stock of ammunition for the town."

On receiving intelligence of the order for closing the port of Boston, a town meeting was called, of which Deacon Aaron Smith was moderator (July 7, 1774), at which it was "*unanimously* agreed to enter into a solemn league or covenant," making it obligatory upon themselves "to renounce the use and consumption of all goods that shall arrive in America from Great Britain from and after the last day of August next," until the repeal of the Harbour Bill, or some other redress of grievances should be effected.

At the same meeting a committee of correspondence was appointed, and it was voted to transmit an attested copy of the transactions of the meeting to the committee of correspondence at Boston.

On the 25th of August ensuing, "at a meeting of the freeholders and other inhabitants of the town duly assembled and convened, the following resolves were unanimously passed, viz.: —

"1st. *Resolved*, That it is the incumbent duty of every inhabitant of these British colonies, and more especially of this distressed province, to unite together in one firm bond of union, and to exert themselves to the uttermost of their power in all lawful and prudent measures to maintain, defend, and secure to ourselves and posterity all those rights and privileges which we are justly entitled to as men and Christians, and as subjects of a free government.

"2dly. *Resolved*, That we acknowledge ourselves loyal and dutiful subjects to King George the Third, whose Crown and Dignity we ever stand ready to maintain and defend so long as he shall rule and govern agreeable to the English constitution and our chartered rights. But, that the authority of late claimed by the British Parliament, to make laws binding on the colonies in all cases whatever,

is unconstitutional and subversive of our natural and chartered rights, oppressive to America, and in no way beneficial to the mother country.

“3dly. *Resolved*, That the late Act of the British Parliament, for blocking up the port or harbor of Boston, by which the town is surrounded by fleets and armies, exposed to the abuses and insults of a lawless soldiery, and by which the means of their subsistence is almost entirely wrenched out of their hands, is very unjust and cruel, contrary to all equity and reason, and injurious and oppressive to this Province.

“4thly. *Resolved*, That the two late Bills of the British Parliament, by which our charter Rights are entirely taken away, and the free constitution of this government utterly annihilated and destroyed, and by which, (if submitted to,) we shall soon be reduced to the most abject slavery and bondage, are a violation of the sacred compact between Great Britain and this Province ; and such a breach of the natural rights and privileges of mankind, and so repugnant to the mutual obligations we are all by the law of nature under towards one another, that no person (unless they are lost to all the tender feelings of humanity) but must reject with abhorrence the thought of thus tyrannizing over their fellow creatures.

“5thly. *Resolved*, That we stand ready to join our feeble efforts in conjunction with the rest of our brethren in these colonies, or of this Province, to prevent the above-mentioned acts from taking place, and also to assist, to the utmost of our power, in the most prudent and likely measures that may be adopted, to recover and secure our lost liberties and privileges ; and if it be not too much boldness and presumption for so small a town to mention any particular plan, we are humbly of opinion that it would have a happy tendency to work our deliverance, if the Province should reassume the first charter that was given them, and, at the same time, let the mother country know that we not only remain willing, but even desirous, to continue loyal and dutiful subjects to King George, consistent with the liberties and privileges granted in said charter.

“6thly. *Resolved*, That, as committees from the several towns in this county have lately had a meeting at Worcester, which stands adjourned to the last Tuesday in this month, for the purpose of consulting together and agreeing on some measures for this county to take to prevent our courts from being held on, or modelled accord-

ing to the new Establishment, we hereby signify our approbation of the same, and that we stand ready to join in such measures as shall be thought most likely to effect the above purpose ; and as the committee of correspondence for this town have sent one of their members to attend the above mentioned meeting, we fully concur with, and approve of, their conduct in so doing, and that William Bigelow and Daniel Lamson be and are hereby appointed to attend the adjournment of said meeting.

“7thly. *Resolved*, That if any person shall accept any commission or post of office to serve under the new Establishment, he ought to be looked upon and treated as an enemy to his country ; as he, thereby, is joining with, and lending a helping hand to those who are endeavouring to enslave us.

“The foregoing Resolves being distinctly read paragraph by paragraph in an open town meeting convened in Athol, August 25, A. D. 1774, were unanimously accepted and ordered to be recorded.

“Pr. Wm. Bigelow, Town Clerk. Aaron Smith, Moderator.”

At a legal meeting of the town on the 29th of September following, it was voted “to enlist thirty men exclusive of officers to send in case of alarm,” and also “to have two companies of militia in town,” one on each side of the river.

At this meeting William Bigelow was chosen a delegate to attend and represent the town “in the Provincial Congress to be holden at Concord on the second Tuesday of October,” ensuing. Also at the same meeting Mr. Bigelow was chosen a delegate to attend at Cambridge and “join with the Provincial Congress at their first sessions after the Continental Congress breaks up and the members that went from this province return home.”

January 11, 1775, the town voted “that we do approve of and will adopt the non importation agreement recommended by the Continental Congress.” At this meeting the town chose a “Committee of Inspection to see that the resolves of the Continental and Provincial Congresses are faithfully observed.”

These meetings, as all previous meetings of the town had been, were warned in “His Majesty’s name.” The last meeting that was so warned was held March 6, 1775. After this date the town does not appear to have acknowledged the authority of the king.

June 15, 1775, the town met and voted to raise a "Minute Company," to consist of twenty-five men, including officers. July 24, 1776, voted "to grant six pounds to each man who should enlist into the colony service to go to Canada." March 10, 1777, "voted to raise thirty pounds to provide a town stock of ammunition." April 29, voted to pay twenty-four pounds to each man who "shall enlist himself into the Continental army for three years or during the war." The selectmen were directed to borrow the money. June 6, six pounds were granted in addition to the above to each man so enlisting. December 16, "voted to raise 1,128 pounds 16 shillings, to pay the extraordinary charges of the war." January 22, 1778, "Voted to accept and approve of the Articles of Confederation and perpetual Union between the several States of America, as drawn up by the Congress." April 9, voted not to accept of "the plan or form of government for this State, as agreed upon by the Convention of said State, Feb. 28, 1778." Voted "to supply the families of those that are gone into the army with the necessaries of life." June 16, voted "to raise 125 pounds, 11 shillings, to pay for the continental clothing and for transporting the same to the army." July 15, voted "to raise 1583 pounds three shillings and eight pence to pay those men that have done services in the war for the town of Athol." June 28, 1779, voted "to give 500 pounds for each man that will engage in the nine months continental service." Voted "to allow 170 pounds for any man that will engage in the six months service to Providence Plantation." October 27, 1780, voted to allow 7,650 pounds to Oliver Holman, for beef procured by him, as agent of the town, for the army. May 14, 1781, voted "to raise 112 hard dollars to provide the town stock of ammunition."

Many other votes of minor importance relative to the war were passed by the town.*

* Two young men from this town, one by the name of Morse and the other by the name of Goddard, were simultaneously killed by the enemy at the battle of White Plains. "Mr. Earl Cutting, their Townsman and Messmate, was between them when they fell." (Mr. Humphrey's MS., before referred to.)

NOTE II.

THIS town retained its Indian name until March 6th, 1762, when it was incorporated * and called Athol, out of respect to some person or persons, it is said, who removed from Athol in Scotland to this State.

The first order to warn a town meeting, under the act of incorporation was issued to George Cutting, of Athol, "one of the principal inhabitants," by John Murry, of Rutland, a justice of the peace, who was empowered to issue such order by an "Act of the Great and General Court." The order was dated at Rutland, "15th of March 1762, in the second year of his present Majesty's Reign." The first meeting of the town was held agreeably to this order on Monday, the 29th of March, 1762, at which John Murry, Esq. was chosen Moderator, and William Oliver, Aaron Smith, and John Haven, Selectmen.

Originally the town was six miles square. Subsequently a portion was set off to Gerry, now Phillipston, afterwards another portion to Orange, and still another to Royalston. Within a few years a portion of the town of New Salem, called Podunk (the Indian name of the locality), has been annexed to Athol.

On the Church Book is the following minute : — "The number of souls [in this town] according to the census taken by the Marshal in September, 1790, was 862, of which were females 442, males 420, and six negroes."

The whole number of inhabitants in the year 1840 was 1,566. The number of inhabitants on the first of June, 1850, was, males 1,046, females 987. Total, 2,033.

NOTE III.

THE first public provision made for schools in town was at a town meeting, March 7, 1763, when it was voted to raise thirteen pounds six shillings eight pence, "to provide a school," and "to

* For Act of Incorporation, see *Acts and Laws of His Maj's. Prov. of the Mass. Bay in N. E.* Boston, MDCCLIX. Folio ed. p. 425.

divide the school money by the River and those that live on the south side to have what they pay towards the sum raised ; and those that live on the north side to have what they pay toward the s^d sum."

The first school-house was built (according to the remembrance of an intelligent lady, now ninety-four years old, who was born in town, daughter of Wm. Bigelow) on the Street "south of the fort." According to the records, the town voted, March 3, 1761, "to build *two* school houses, one on the West Hill between Deacon Aaron Smith's and Ichabod Dexter's, the other on the East Hill [or Street] at the head of Capt. Field's Lane, so called ; and the above houses are to be built sixteen feet wide and eighteen feet long and six feet and a half stud." Probably these were the first school-houses in town.

The first schoolmasters, according to the recollection of the aged lady before named, were Mr. Merrick, Mr. Stone, and Mr. Sampson.

May 15, 1770, the town voted "to have a school kept at the south end of Meeting-house Hill, and one at the north end ; one on the east part of the town ; one at the southwest part ; one on West Hill ; and one on Chestnut Hill ; and each part to enjoy the benefit of the money they pay for schooling."

The first division of the town into school districts, or "squadarns," as they were termed, was made May 18, 1774 ; when it was voted, "that the West Hill and all west of Tully east branch be a squadarn for a school ; that Chestnut Hill, so called, and all east of the east branch of Tully, north of the River, be a squadarn for a school ; and that four squadarns for schools be made on the south side of the River."

NOTE IV.

Two or three negro slaves were formerly held in this town. Of these, one, "Old Violet," is well remembered. For many years she was the slave of the first minister. At length she was sold by Mr. Humphrey to Mr. Thomas Stratton, and finally, after the death of Mr. Stratton and the manumission of slaves in this Com-

monwealth, she was supported by the town until she died, in the poor-house, at a very advanced age, about twenty years since.

Another, a negro boy named Titus, was given to Rev. Mr. Humphrey by Rev. Aaron Whitney of Petersham. He died in Mr. Humphrey's family, Nov. 7, 1773, aged only three years and six months. (Church Records.) At his funeral Rev. Mr. Humphrey preached a sermon from this text. "The small and the great are there, and the servant is free from his master." — Job iii. 19.

Mr. H., it is said, had another slave, named Moody. He died young. There is no satisfactory evidence that any other person in town kept slaves.

NOTE V.

At a meeting of the members of the First Church and Society in Athol, August 22, 1850, after making choice of Deacon Jonathan Stratton for chairman, it was unanimously voted to celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the organization of said church.

Deacon Jonathan Stratton, John Harvey Humphrey, S. F. Cheney, George Sprague, John Kendall, Laban Morse, Lyman W. Hapgood, H. W. Carter, and Theodore Jones, Esq. were chosen a committee of arrangements to make suitable preparations for the proper celebration of this interesting anniversary.

At a meeting of the above committee of arrangements, it was voted to insert a notice of the celebration in the *White Flag*, published in town, and in the *Christian Register*.

H. W. Carter and L. W. Hapgood were appointed a sub-committee to invite the members of the other religious societies in town to be present at the celebration. H. W. Carter was appointed a committee of correspondence to invite the surviving contemporaries of Rev. Mr. Estabrook in the ministry, and other guests, to be present.

The exercises of the celebration commenced at two o'clock P. M., and were as follows, viz. : —

I. A voluntary by the choir.

II. Hymn 751 of the Cheshire Collection.

- III. Prayer by Rev. Dr. WILLARD of Deerfield.
 IV. Selections from Scripture read by Rev. PRESERVED SMITH
 of Deerfield.
 V. Hymn 745 of Cheshire Collection.
 VI. Discourse.
 VII. Prayer by Rev. ALPHEUS HARDING of New Salem.
 VIII. Hymn, written for the occasion, by Mrs. M. E. CLARKE.

God of our fathers, at thy shrine
 We raise our souls in humble prayer ;
 With grateful hearts we own thy love,
 And, waiting, bow, thy suplicants there.

Where first those fathers trembling stood
 In doubt and fear to worship thee,
 Their filial offspring now can stand,
 From all those doubts and terrors free.

We thank thee for that noble zeal
 Which bade our sires those trials brave ;
 We thank thee for that vital faith
 Which thou to every bosom gave.

O Father, may that holy shrine
 Those pious spirits planted here
 Be ever our abiding church, —
 Be ever to our hearts most dear.

O, may that peace be ne'er disturbed
 Which in our happy union reigns ;
 And may that love which warms our souls
 For ever be a living flame.

When those who round this altar bend
 Shall mingle with their fathers' dust,
 O God, to hearts no less sincere
 Do thou this ancient church intrust.

IX. Benediction by Rev. Dr. WILLARD.

The congregation then united in singing "From all that dwell

below the skies," to the tune of Old Hundred ; after which the whole crowded assembly repaired to the hall above the church, and partook of a bountiful collation prepared with great taste by the ladies of the First Parish.

The repast being over, the meeting was addressed by the Chairman, REV. PRESERVED SMITH ; after which the following original hymn, written for the occasion, by Mr. ALDEN SPOONER, was sung by the choir : —

Within a lone, sequestered glen,
All desolate and wild,
The haunt of beasts and savage men,
Here roamed the forest child.

Beneath the tall, primeval wood
And mossy mural crag,
There rolled a deep impetuous flood,
The rapid, dark Pequoiag.

Here in this wilderness-abode
Our pious fathers rear
A consecrated shrine to God,
In humble praise and prayer.

Here their devoted songs of praise
In accents sweetly flow,
And here the suppliant's voice was raised
One hundred years ago.

Where once the Indian's wigwam rose,
Amid the tangled vine,
Now bloom the sweet and fragrant rose
And garden eglantine.

A thousand cattle on the hills
In verdant pastures roam ;
The whitened fields along the vales
Proclaim the " Harvest Home."

The artisan, with cunning skill,
 Compels the idle flood
 To bow obsequious to his will,
 And labor for his good.

When, hark ! is heard in distance far,
 Now screeching o'er the plain
 The clarion of the coming car,
 With its rich-freighted train.

To God let unborn millions raise,
 Where once the Indian roamed,
 United pæans to his praise
 Hundreds of years to come.

Addresses were then made by REV. LUTHER WILSON of Petersham, REV. CRAWFORD NIGHTINGALE of Chicopee, Rev. Dr. WIL-
 LARD, GEORGE HOYT, M. D., of Athol, and REV. H. F. BOND of
 Barre.

The exercises of the evening closed with a select piece by the
 choir ; and the crowded, happy gathering adjourned the meeting
one hundred years.

 The letters received relative to the historical facts embraced in
 the foregoing Discourse and Appendix, together with such historical
 papers as I have collected, or may collect, will be placed with the Church
 Records for future reference.

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